

HEALING AND EMPOWERING THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM
ADDICTIONS: A PROPOSED MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

A THESIS
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“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.”

(2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach the deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” (Luke 4:18-19)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a systemic study of a proposed ministry of the role of the urban church in strategic planning and intervention for accomplishing God's redemptive work on the earth—healing and empowerment in addictions ministry through holistic healing and systems thinking in an addictions ministry. The framework of this project is reflected in what Eldin Villafaña refines to as 'the hermeneutical circle of social ethics'. This paradigm involves three steps that ask three basic questions: *Clarification* – What is going on? *Conceptualization* – What does the Bible and other applicable disciplines say? *Confrontation* – How do we respond?

This dissertation examines addictions in a systemic, biblical, social, and theological study of interrelatedness of systems. By examining the systemic structures in spiritual and social theology involves liberation and transformation through biblical teaching and illumination. The dissertation includes an array of parts by data collected from foundational and secondary resources. Through redemptive models of ministry, the dissertation examines the problems of addictions, its causes and its effects, in our urban communities. The thesis provides information to connect applications of an addictions ministry to those who suffer from addictions, oppression, and bondages of all kinds from addictions, substance abuse, and dysfunctional systems. Through systemic thinking, the thesis leads towards a holistic spiritual development plan in healing, intervention, and empowerment to all people in the urban center of Brockton, Massachusetts and the church.

PART 1: CLARIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH COMMUNITIES OF HEALING

How do we make sense out of the massive problem of addictions in our communities which affects so many of us individually, as families, as a culture, and perhaps as an entire nation? Why do we not take a stand to implement recovery houses, treatment facilities, and ministries to help save our children, our sons, our daughters, and our families from the power of addiction, and drug abuse? Why in our towns and cities there are inadequate halfway houses, for men, women, and children? Where are the treatment centers (spiritually, legally, and biblically-faith based ministries) impacting those who plummet to death or who are among the walking dead in our communities, our urban shelters, and in our penal institutions suffering from drugs and addictions? Where is the safe place for addicts to go when they are in dire need of help and intervention? Why are there so few detoxification and treatment centers for those who suffer from drug use and addictions? All over America in our cities there is a war cry due to the increase of gang, guns, and violence. This is a reality that is beginning to knock on the doors of everyone's life in the city.

Addiction is part of a spiritual sickness. Restoration and recovery is a part of the systemic process and thinking for real transformation of the addictive person to occur. The Church and other interrelated community agencies who work with treatment of addicts will need to partner in these efforts for a holistic approach to an effective ministry to all of the complex issues concerning drug addiction, substance abuse, and other

addictions. The church's role is vital in being a safe-haven, and a community of hope, faith and love from the destructive nature of the stigma, behaviors, and the issues concerning those who suffer from addictions. The plan of action to eradicate the silence around drug addictions and other addictions in our churches and in our communities is paramount to the thesis-project.

THE PURPOSE OF THE THESIS-PROJECT

My passion as a sojourner of truth is to continue to seek out strategies for intervention and treatment. I continue to journey towards serving those who suffer from the ill-effects of addictions and substance abuse as servants of the Lord God who have been given the Great Commission and the mandate to reach one, save one, nurture one, and help someone to be snatched from the hands of the enemy and the evil forces behind addictions.¹ Knowledge and understanding of biblical principles surrounding spiritual warfare, spiritual methods, tools, and systemic thinking in the 21st century are invaluable to this project.

At the time of this writing more meetings are being held in Brockton, MA due to the alarmingly increase of our city streets being saturated with murders and guns by young people, some as young as twelve-years old. The Mayor's office and the newly formed Ministers of Color alliance (which I am key member) began talks to understand why these killings are rising in the city. The clergy has set up meetings with Chief of Police and Police Units who continue to do just that talk and show biases toward people in our neighborhoods who are suffering, panicking, and hopeless. There are many in the city of Brockton suffering from drug abuse and addictions.

¹ Richard A. Kauffman. "Overcoming Addictions," *Christianity Today*, 20 March 2001, 88.

I have by no means found the cure for addictions, or the best approach for recovery from addictions for that matter, nor do I have all the answers. But it is necessary to extend yourself here in this project to develop a model of intervention for addictions, theological and biblical insights, and effective ways to help understand those who suffer from addictions and intervention methods that are suggestions to our ministry.

I have humbly submitted to this project and to the new life I found in Jesus Christ. In memory of those addicts who have died in their active addictions I am reminded how precious life is and how important this ministry is to our society today. My personal walk with God along with the regeneration of my mind which is being transformed daily by the Word of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior to trust in God. Our prayers are that some may find, like us, that God is everything and a life without the love of God is meaningless. God is our refuge, our shield, and our faith remains in God for he will protect us from dangers seen and unseen, from the schemes of the world, people (flesh), and the devil. All those who suffer from addictions, there is a better way of life.

This project is just the tip of the iceberg as I examine, learn, and comprehend the reality of addictions. The problem of addictions and substance abuse of all kinds is global. It is a universal problem. It is well known that the problem of addictions affects all levels of a human being. The project will attempt to define, develop, and implement understanding for ministry to treat those suffering or hurting from the affects of this potentially fatal sickness and disease. All levels of human experience must be addressed: the physical, emotional, socio-emotional, psychological, biological, spiritual, mental, psychosocial. Systemic thinking on this issue of addiction weeds out the notion of implementing quick fixes to the problem. An important point is that addictions are not

limited to substances. There are addictions to work, performance, responsibility, intimacy, sex, self-esteem, television, video games, pornography, computers, helping others, controlling others, and an almost endless list of other behaviors. The mosaic of addiction involves many facets beyond what we can describe here.²

The topic of addictions is too often a taboo subject that is not readily spoken about or addressed in the local church, in sermons, in the pulpit and in the pews. The proposal I set forth is exciting as I seek understanding, education, and awareness of the issue of addictions and how we can propose effective intervention strategies collectively and holistically in our communities and in my church to minister to those who suffer from addictions. We propose to develop and pursue an effective addictions ministry and intervention for healing and empowerment to those who suffer from drug addictions and other addictions using the interrelatedness of systems thinking and a redemptive model in our ministry and at Mt. Moriah Baptist Church.

Most churches and people in our communities do not understand the root causes and problems of addictions and drug addictions. The visible and invisible behaviors of addictions are a clue to other deep spiritual maladies, iniquities, and conditions. Intervention is key to successful treatment for an addict or to those who suffer from addictions. The need for help and hope and education on the issue of addiction is significant and real. Those who suffer from addictions often are full of shame and guilt, loneliness and hopelessness, and are in grave danger and death on a daily basis.

An addictions ministry must acknowledge that some of our best efforts are counterproductive due to the fallen ness of humanity and sin. God mandates me as servant of the Most High God to go to Judea, Samaria, and Jerusalem and preach the

2. <http://www.questia.com/popularSearches/addiction.jsp>. 2004.

gospel of Jesus Christ looking to scriptures for empowerment and assurance for this ministerial task set before me. In the Word of God in the gospel of Luke:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19).

This is the great commission given to the church and to all believers.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Primary Research Question: How can the church play a vital role in ministry/ministering spiritual healing and recovery to people who suffer from addictions and other addictions in the 21st century?

Secondary Research Questions:

1. SETTING AND CHALLENGES (Chapter One): How has the history and setting of Mt. Moriah Baptist Church impacted healing and empowerment of those who suffer from addictions in our community and congregations?
2. LITERATURE REVIEW (Chapter Two): What current literature speaks to the issues of substance abuse, drug addiction, and other addictions? How does the literature impact the thesis-project?
3. THEOLOGY (Chapter Three): What guiding biblical and theological principles can be developed toward an exegetical study of the scriptures regarding healing and empowerment in an addictions ministry?
4. PROJECT DESIGN (Chapter Four): What research investigations can be utilized to gain an understanding of perceived strengths and hindrances to developing an addictions ministry? What are some of the effective

interventions and strategy actions that can take place in the development of safe-havens and healing communities in a dysfunctional church and community? What ways can the body of Christ implement and create an effective addictions ministry for people who suffer from addictions?

5. OUTCOMES, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(Chapter Five): What are the implications of systemic thinking and redemptive models in planning the next steps of developing healing, empowerment, and intervention strategies/ministry in proposing an addictions ministry at MMBC? What further research, investigation, and pedagogy are needed to confront the complex issues of substance abuse, and addictions in our local church and communities? What strategies can the church collaborate to effectively create a ministry that brings healing, and empowerment to the whole person?

THE METHODOLOGY

The overall framework of this Thesis-Project follows Eldin Villafañe's Social Ethics "Hermeneutic Circle" Paradigm.³ The circle involves three ways to identify the answers to three basic questions from a systemic point of view:

1. Clarification: What is the nature of the issue of addictions and substance abuse in the local church community?
2. Conceptualization: What is the biblical and theological basis for and proposing an addictions ministry toward those who suffer from addictions?

³ Eldin Villafañe, "The Hermeneutic Circle in Social Ethics: A Paradigm," a lecture delivered to Doctor of Ministry Residency, June 2006, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston, MA.

3. Confrontation: In what ways can the local congregation and Christians intentionally and compassionately respond in order to remove the hindrances and obstacles to an effective ministry to those who suffer from substance abuse and other addictions?

In order to reflect upon the issues systemically, learning teams were formed and utilized.

THE ASSUMPTIONS

The following factors are assumed in this project:

1. The Word of God and pastoral counseling is of significant importance in ministering to those who suffer from addictions. Education, recovery, empowerment, and healing are indeed possible. Anyone who suffers from addictions contends with powerful spiritual forces. Entire families and individual lives can be destroyed in the aftermath of addiction.
2. In order for real “change” to occur confession of the problem must be admitted first. What do you want to do about the addictions problem is a critical step in the process of healing. Can you accept the help for your problem is important in the initial stage called, ‘soul-searching’, ‘inventory of self’, and being rigorously honest about an addiction(s). A spiritual remedy is the long-term goal in our intervention ministry. Empowerment and Healing an addictions ministry is to be conformed, reconciled, and transformed by the Word of God. Transformation comes in the hearts, minds, and souls of the disciples, and world systems, as applying bible truths takes place. God purposed even before the foundation of the world for the followers of Christ

to be set apart and blameless (Eph. 1:4). God's purpose for the Christian is to grow and become Christ-like; thus an addict and Christians must grow in Christ. Those who do not progress in spiritual growth are in spiritual retardation. John Stott describes them "have never graduated from the nursery" and suffer from spiritual regression.⁴

3. It is assumed that addiction, a force that turns us away from love, is more vicious than acts of hate. Addiction is one of the most powerful psychic forces and an enemy of humanity's desire for God. Progression towards a holistic and systemic approach seeks to enable healing, intervention, and enhance wellness in all dimensions of people's lives and relationships. The same processes that are responsible for addiction to alcohol, ideas, narcotics, control, substance abuse, power, sexual addictions, shopping, are also responsible for addictions to pornography, money, work, relationships, fantasies, moods, and an endless variety of other things including religious addictions. It is important to assume here that the addictive potential of religion comes not only from its systemic hierarchy but also from its capacity to "hook" shame-based people. Its use of ritual makes it easier to use tactics of manipulation and control, making many people vulnerable to its seduction.⁵
4. It is assumed that sin separates us from God, and sin is a form of rebellion. So many people are misled, and misguided in their relationship with God, where they continue to worship idol gods over the true and living God of the Holy Scriptures. It is a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body when you are in

⁴ John Stott, "Christian Basics: An Invitation to Discipleship" (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 33.

⁵ Matthew Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, and Dennis Linn. *Healing Spiritual Abuse and Religious Addiction*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 13.

the grips of addictions. Redemption is found in the Lordship of Jesus Christ becoming Lord in every area of our lives. “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.” (Romans 7:18-19 NIV).

5. It is assumed, however one understands recovery, that it is a process of growing in a new way of living. It is a continuing path along which people move rather than a static goal that they achieve. The role of the clergy and congregations vary from person to person and from one stage of recovery to the next.
6. It is assumed addictions leave a devastating effect on friends and loved ones. Research further estimated that the lives of one in three people are seriously disrupted by addiction. In any local congregation there are many people dealing with this issue who are troubled, fearful, confused, shamed, but they do not talk about the addictions issue in their lives or in their families. What can the church in the 21st century do to open their hearts? How can the church do effective ministry to those who suffer from addictions? It can take an active role in learning about addictions and drug abuse.

As our society watches as we lose our children and families—to drugs, gangs, violence, and homicide to suicide, the biblical challenge we have is to bring about a “growing awareness that healing people from either their polite or stigmatized addictions involves helping to heal the social and natural environments upon which all our healing and wholeness ultimately depends. Social context factors and influences such as

consumerism, injustices, sexism, racism, classism, ageism, and alienation from the earth are among the root causes of many the problems. All this has enlarged the recovery challenge, moving it beyond individual and family recovery to include recovery of the church, our society, and our planet.”⁶

“The Psalmist expressed feelings with which many recovering addicts can identify: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s (Psalm 103:2-5).”⁷

PARAMETERS OF THE PROJECT

The focus of the project is to examine and learn from other models of ministry by clergy and congregations, and then to educate my own church about this so it can build on other effective ministries and frameworks to develop its own holistic intervention and strategy plans to those who suffer from addictions and substance abuse. It is our goal that a proposed ministry at MMBC will bring awareness and prepare us for an effective ministry by developing a redemptive model in our congregations and as Christians, as we serve the needs of healing and empowerment from addictions in our church, our community, and our society in Brockton, Massachusetts.

Addiction education is most effective when it is integrated into the church’s ongoing program of education concerning Christian approaches to social and health

⁶ Howard Clinebell, *Understanding and Counseling Persons with Alcohol, Drug, and Behavioral Addictions* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 462.

⁷ Ibid.

problems. I am attempting to present whatever is taught about alcohol, drugs, and addictions in the context of a positive view of the Christian life as a challenging adventure and a good gift from God, whatever its problems. The emphasis and challenge here is on what churches are for. This is many times more effective than stopping with what they are against. Education is needed in churches, schools, and families. In its proper context and phase of development an addictions ministry is to modify attitudes and feelings about addicted persons. As an Associate Minister at MMBC and as a Minister to many addicted people in my church and community, it is my responsibility as a Christian to implement Jesus' two great commandments—loving God and loving other people (and ourselves) wholeheartedly and effectively.⁸

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Here is a clarification of some key concepts and terms in this study. It is my prayer that this will give a better understanding of the words and terms used in the investigation of this thesis-project.

Addiction – the term most known by professionals, “in the traditional psychiatric usage, is limited to obsessive-compulsive abuse of substances like alcohol and drugs. These are sometimes called *true addictions*. The body-mind organism of those addicted to such consciousness-changing substances has adapted to the presence of the substance. This produces five criteria that are useful in diagnosing addictions”⁹:

⁸ Clinebell, 444-445.

⁹Clinebell, 24.

1. *Tissue tolerance* means that increasing amounts of the substance are required to produce the desired effects, and withdrawal symptoms (like severe hangovers) are experienced when the substance is no longer taken;
2. *Increasing dependence* on the substance, both psychological and physiological;
3. *Obsessive thinking* about and craving for the substance; *Loss of control* in using the substance; and *Continued usage* in spite of negative consequences.

The term *addiction* describes any obsessive-compulsive behavior in which there is some loss of voluntary control so that the victims seriously damage one or more important areas of their lives.”¹⁰

Substance Addictions/Substance abuse – “Substance addictions is a term also called substance abuse that are epidemic in our society include those involving alcohol; legal drugs (both prescribed and over-the-counter); illegal or street drugs (including prescription drugs that are produced and sold illegally); nicotine; caffeine; and food. Psychologist Anne Wilson Schaefer has written extensively popularizing this enlarged definition with which she distinguishes two basic types of addictions—substance addictions and process addictions.”¹¹

Behavioral Addictions – “Sometimes this addiction is called ‘process addictions’ include excessive and destructive uses of work, sex, gambling, shopping, codependent relationships, religion, and acquiring money and power. Seen as ‘activity’ addictions and ‘process addictions’ in their definitions:

“behavior, in which human activities are used like drugs in vain attempts to satisfy deep inner conflicts and emotional hungers. As is true of substance addictions, such behavioral patterns tend to become increasingly harmful to victims’ overall values, living, and well-being.”¹² Activity addictions could be described more precisely as destructive patterns of obsessive thinking and compulsive

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Clinebell, 24.

¹² Ibid.

Obsessive-Compulsive – “Those who suffer from psychologically obsessive patterns have repetitive, anxious thoughts that increasingly dominate their mental processes and feed their compulsive behaviors. *Compulsive* and *compulsion* are terms describing repetitive, out-of-control behavior that often accompanies obsessive thinking.”¹³

Drug Addiction – “Any prolonged use of consciousness-changing drugs that are harmful to oneself and /or others, characterized by increasing loss of freedom to terminate the use volitionally. This loss of freedom seems to be caused by complex psycho-physiological changes in the total body-mind organism. *Chemical dependency* is another term for drug addiction.”¹⁴

Alcoholism – “The compulsive-addictive uses of alcohol are recognized as an illness by both the World Health Organization of the United Nations and the American Medical Association. The primary behavior characteristics of this illness are craving for the psycho-physiological effects of alcohol and continuing excessive use of alcoholic beverages in ways that are harmful to the users and many others. Alcoholism is a progressive, chronic, and potentially fatal disease if it goes unrecognized and untreated. *Alcohol addiction* is synonymous with alcoholism. This term is useful because it communicates a sense of intensity of the compulsion involved.”¹⁵ The term “chronic alcoholism” is the advanced stages of the disease of alcoholism.

Dry Drunk – “This is behavior involving alcoholic thinking by an addicted person who is not using chemicals but is experiencing serious problems in coping with

¹³ Clinebell, 23-24.

¹⁴ Ibid, 25.

¹⁵ Clinebell, 25.

reality without them. It often includes intolerance, judgmentalism, irrational and grandiose thinking, and a defensive lifestyle.”¹⁶

Surrender – “A letting go of defensive denial by addicted persons, who become open to receiving needed help. Usually occurs after confronting a crisis when the person hits bottom.”¹⁷

Dual Diagnosis – “This is a medical term used to describe chemical dependency that exists together with a variety of major psychiatric illnesses, each complicating the other. But with many people whose psychiatric disorder preceded the onset of their addiction (s), ongoing sobriety is usually exceedingly difficult to achieve. If short-term sobriety is achieved, the underlying psychological and interpersonal problems often become visible to others. Mental illness symptoms often fade or disappear when people are successfully treated for their chemical addictions and stop drinking or using.”¹⁸

Intervention – “A carefully planned caring-confrontation of chemically dependent people in which those closest to them present concrete examples of their destructive behavior, statements of strong concern about what will happen if they continue, encouragement to seek help, and information about available resources.”¹⁹

Mental Models – “Deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action. Often, we are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects they have on our behavior.”²⁰

¹⁶ Ibid, 26.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, 27.

²⁰ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 8.

Learning Teams – “The capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine “thinking together”, and the discipline of team learning starts with ‘dialogue’. To the Greeks *dia-logos* meant a free-flowing of meaning through a group, allowing the group to discover insights not attainable individually.”²¹

Learning Organization – “An organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together. A group of people functioning together; learning together in an extraordinary way learning how to produce extraordinary results.”²²

Hospitality – This means friendly and cordial treatment of guests, hospitable treatment, reception, or disposition. The word *hospitable* is synonymous with hospitality. This word is given to generous and cordial reception of guests; promising or suggesting generous and cordial welcome; offering a pleasant or sustaining environment; and readily receptive; as OPEN (~ to new ideas).”²³

Systems Thinking – “This is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed to make the full patterns clearer of invisible fabrics of interrelated systems and actions and to help us change them effectively.”²⁴

Enabler - “one that enables another to achieve an end; esp: one who enables another to persist in self~ destructive behavior (as substance abuse) by providing excuses or by helping that individual avoid the consequences of such behavior.”²⁵

²¹ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 10.

²² Ibid, 3-4.

²³ Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1999), 560.

²⁴ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 7.

Codependency – “The concept sheds light on addictive family systems by identifying the relationship addictions (called love addictions) from which they suffer and need to recover. Codependents are obsessively dependent on the dependence of addicted members to maintain a sense of their own security, power, and self-esteem.

Pastoral theologian/psychologist Robert H. Albers edits the Journal of Ministry in Addiction and Recovery, a major source focusing on the clergy’s role in ministering to addicts and their families.”²⁶ Here is his working definition of codependency:

“A primary lifestyle disorder occasioned by adaptation to and being enmeshed with an unhealthy relationship or relationships which result in the loss of a person’s sense of self or a group’s sense of identity. As family members have adjusted, readjusted, and finally maladjusted to the dysfunctional situation, codependency occurs. Albers observes that codependency occurs not just in individual family members’ relationships with the addicted one and in the collective interaction of their family system, but also in congregations as social systems of shared faith.”²⁷

“Psychologically, those who are addicted to codependency are caught on a treadmill trying in vain to earn their acceptance by caretaking of others. In theological terms, they are caught in graceless attempts to earn their salvation by their good works.”²⁸ Psychologist Charlotte Davis Kasl writes, “The goal of codependent behavior is to find externally the security and power that is lacking internally. The belief system is that one cannot exist on one’s own, and one therefore must do whatever it takes to keep a partner and any other symbols of security, such as home, children, and financial support.”²⁹

“Warm, empathetic understanding from clergy and other counselors, is desired due to “the crippling interpersonal pattern in addicted families is a vicious, self-feeding cycle that could be described as a ‘runaway family crisis.’”³⁰

²⁵ Merriam-Webster, 380.

²⁶ Clinebell, *Understanding and Counseling Persons with Alcohol, Drug, and Behavioral Addictions*, 401.

²⁷ Clinebell, 403.

²⁸ Clinebell, 403.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

Dysfunctional Church – A dysfunctional church organizes itself similar to individuals with similar obsessive-compulsive behaviors, process addictions, addictive personalities, and other addictions. The dysfunctional church is an unhealthy church and does not properly function in its full potential or purposes.

Redemptive method - A method of understanding complex urban realities to utilize systems thinking as a tool for appropriating systemic theological truths into everyday spiritual lives—integrating thinking, doing, and being as agents of transformation within communities with the gospel.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SETTING AND CHALLENGES: DEVELOPING AN ADDICTIONS MINISTRY AT MOUNT MORIAH BAPTIST CHURCH THROUGH INTERVENTION AND EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES

Addiction is not something we can simply take care of by applying the proper remedy. This project addresses the issue of addictions within the context of the role of the church in its treatment and intervention in ministry. This urban context, Brockton, Massachusetts, Mt. Moriah Baptist Church thrives with an average membership of 300 persons in attendance for Sunday morning worship. The church members come from a wide variety of denominational backgrounds and cultures, predominantly African-American, and many different experiences. I serve as an Associate Minister, and the church members have a rich legacy of 25 years of ministry in the community of Brockton, MA. The church was founded on a path of great hardship, wilderness experiences, and continuous prayers from a few good members that knew God was on their side.

The project and ministry emanates from personal dreams, prayers, a vision and call to service with a special assignment for addictions, those who suffer from addictions, the poor, the rich, and the oppressed caught in the vicious cycle of addictions. The task of learning and understanding through invaluable resources is:

What are some effective strategies to develop ways a discipleship-compassionate healing and empowerment ministry can occur for people who suffer from addictions and substance abuse in our communities with the help of our churches? A spiritual wellness and development center may be housed in a faith-based center or church based center. This ministry is dedicated to helping serve those whose backgrounds and lives center

around the use and abuse of drugs and to those who suffer from addictions or who need recovery to maintain sobriety from drug abuse and other addictions.

Education, recovery, restoration, and healing from this destruction (addictions) are indeed possible. Anyone who suffers from drug abuse and any other addictions contends with powerful satanic forces and evil. Entire families, neighborhoods, and individual lives can be destroyed in the aftermath of addictions. The proper counseling, spiritual wisdom, and a spiritual foundation based on the well-being and common good of the person who suffers from addiction is biblical.

The silence in our communities, in our churches, behind the pulpits, and the fear surrounding addiction and addicts are enormous, as well as the misconceptions of “mental models”, ideologies and value are what is involved in the restoration of the lives of people from a lifetime of substance abuse, guilt and shame, trauma and pain. The ‘soul-sickness’ of addiction is all too complex and at times embedded in the heart, soul, and minds of many who suffer. It is a taboo subject, especially for the alcoholic and drug addict, who silently suffers and who has family members often perplexed by the behaviors of an addict. Many families become exhausted in their efforts to get proper help and care. Many families remain in denial that the problem is severe, and beyond their help. They feel hopeless and in despair, even shame. These feelings can occur within a family even if all of the family members are not addictive or suffering from addictions.

In the 21st century church, many subjects and issues are not talked about in our pulpits, bible classes, or Sunday schools subjects such as addictions occur in our every day lives. As neighbors, church members, citizens, individuals, families, clergy, and

ministers of the gospel in our world we are challenged to wrestle with real solutions to real problems. So often those who suffer from addictions will not openly discuss the reality of their situation nor seek treatment or help. Many problems in our society exists like sex, gangs, clergy abuse, adultery, guns, unwed mothers and fathers, alcoholism, teen violence and teen pregnancy, domestic violence, and drugs. Throughout the United States and in surrounding countries in the world we have much in common. Thousands of subjects could be added to this list of common issues we face in our daily life.

The suffering addict, who has been in the grips of the despair and hopelessness of addictions, realizes there are underlying causes that lead one to abuse drugs and addictions. Intervention, education, and biblical knowledge are spiritual keys to a solid spiritual foundation.

In our church there is not a ministry like this reaching out into the community where drug use and addictions prevalent and alive and well in the city. There is a local church called New Life Community Church that recently started reaching out to those who suffer from drug addiction to attend a weeknight bible study. I was very excited to see this outreach in our community in Brockton. My particular church does not have a substance abuse ministry and/or addictions ministry of this magnitude. However, we have been instruments as well as servants in a learning team at our local church with other couples, families, men and women who suffer from addictions, and we have made a significant impact on the project ministry.

It has been progress not perfection, but many have discovered how good God is when we seek His face, His power, His Word, and as we come to know Him for ourselves. Some people have had a real life changing experience at our church through

pilgrims who felt the unction and passion to reach and minister to us who have come from similar experiences of battling with our addictions, fears, guilt and shame, broken and shattered lives and families.

Whatever one's addiction might be, the craziness of the behavior or the insanity of the journey as individuals lost at sea, shipwrecked and hooked deeply in our addictions and substance abuse, we need emergency help. A common thread is intertwined in the addictive lifestyle. It is one of lies, denial, sex and games, gambling, codependency, abuse of families, credit cards, neighbors and friends, money, role playing. These are often the games we play to mask what is really the seriousness of our behaviors and illness. We play games of manipulation and denial to keep the cycle of addiction on course so we as individuals can continue to remain addictive to the substance, object, behavior, etc. It is only a matter of time before the inevitable occurs, the humiliating crash to the 'bottoms' by which we as addicts will do anything to get our drug or fix satisfied, resulting in jail, insane behavior, institutions, dereliction, and death. Many people who suffered from addictions and are free today, will witness to this spiral downfall of destruction in our addictions. Many of us have been reconciled to God, healed and delivered from the power of addiction, by the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in recovery daily and our lives are filled with the Spirit, the passion, and the anointing of Jesus Christ trying to make a difference in the lives of other brothers and sisters in the community and in the world that need help.

DEFINING THE ADDICT AND EXPLORING ADDICTIONS

What do we mean by drug addiction, substance abuse, dope feign, crack addict, sexual addict, and the addictive personality? What do we mean by addiction? Who becomes or what is an addict? Although these are common phrases and labels given to people who suffer from addictions. There are many other derogatory names given to those people who suffer from alcoholism like drunks, drunkards, and whores. Like the illnesses of addictions, “alcoholism is a complex illness, but it is also true that alcoholics are human beings with an illness about which much is understood and from which many may recover. Although a great deal remains to be learned about this illness, a great deal is known, and the pastor who is acquainted with the present body of knowledge can enrich his ministry to and effectiveness with alcoholics and their families.”³¹ Yet, these are all elementary questions that conjure up all kinds of perceptions in our minds and mental models. I shared honestly with one another on the learning team because I wanted to eliminate as much biases or prejudices of persuading my own mindsets and beliefs onto this project.

When we talk of addictions or addictive persons, many people have mental models, ideas, perceptions, ignorance’s and prejudices, misconceptions, and biases directly related to what they have heard, seen, or read about of what it means to be addictive. Labels of various kinds are put on those who suffer from addictions in inappropriate terms or illustrations. There are serious misconceptions, concepts and ideas

³¹ Keller, John E. *Ministering To Alcoholics*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966, ix.

that will need clarity, knowledge, understanding, education, training, and compassionate approaches about the problem and its ramifications. By presenting valuable information and pertinent facts on addictions we therefore gain invaluable knowledge and clearer understanding to those questions.

“The use of psychoactive (mood –altering) substances is as ancient as humanity. Through the ages people have turned to distilled spirits, opiates, and other natural or synthetic drugs in search of relief from boredom, depression, and anxiety—or simply to get “high”. But despite the fact that the use of psychoactive substances is present to varying degrees in many societies, incidences of severe habit formation or addiction occur among only a small percentage of those who expose themselves to these substances. To explain the true measure of addiction, we can look at how far a user will go to get a particular drug, determine to what extent use of this drug dominates his or her life and values, and judge how much control a user has over the abused substance. When drug use or any other compulsive behavior becomes the center of a person’s existence, becoming more important than all other aspects of his or her life, we can then say that such a person is to all intents and purposes “addicted”.”³²

Why have many congregations not developed dynamic alcohol and drug ministries when the need is so great and their role so strategic? We live now in a very chaotic yet changing urban scene. The world today is in transition, it isn’t easy for congregations to keep their ministries relevant to the places where people are hurting and hoping, cursing and struggling, living and dying. There are numerous other reasons for this neglect. Many of these are derived from erroneous conclusions drawn from half-truths (or less) reflected in assertions such as these: ‘A.A. is the only answer. A.A. and the experts in the field can take care of the problem. ‘The church got over-involved in Prohibition and that was a fiasco.’ Drinking is a personal matter in which the church shouldn’t interfere.’ ‘Medical experts say that wine is good for your heart’. ‘Jesus turned water into wine for a wedding party and Saint Paul told Timothy to drink a little

³² Cox, Miles W. and Solomon Snyder. *The Encyclopedia of Psychoactive Drugs: The Addictive Personality*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986, 19.

wine for his stomach problems'. Overcoming resistances such as these is essential if many more congregations are to develop ministries like those that empower communities and can make significant contributions to both preventing and treating addictions.³³

"The spiritual vitality of a congregation is depleted by not reaching out to the rejected victims of individual and social diseases and oppression nearby. Think for a moment about the spiritual price paid by the two busy religious leaders in Jesus' story who chose to walk by without stopping to help. Like them, the spiritual health of clergy and churches today is diminished when they also go by on the other side, as they think to themselves, "Let A.A. (or the Salvation Army) take care of these unfortunate victims of addictive violence. Anyway, they probably brought the problem on themselves. Similar to the case of the rejected Samaritan, Christians and their congregations are spiritually enriched if they interrupt their busyness and get involved."³⁴

A VIEW OF THE CITY ON ADDICTIONS

Understanding God's sovereign purpose for the city is essential if believers are to have the inspiration and faith necessary to respond to the urban challenges in the 21st century. "Cities are magnets for the runaway, throwaway kids who cannot or will not live in homes where they are molested, beaten and rejected. A crucial test of the moral character of a society is found in how it treats its outcasts. Modern Western societies will be judged all the more harshly, not only because of how we treat our children, but because of the way we created their wounds."³⁵

The erosion of Christian morality in every sphere of life is not just the result of the denial of biblical principles. I am convinced that we contend with spiritual powers of darkness, evil, and deception. When people are disobedient, and follow the passions of the flesh and are by nature filled with wrath, their state is associated with Satan's influence (Ephesians 2:2). "When people are slaves to their passions, they are described

³³ Clinebell, 433.

³⁴ Ibid, 432.

³⁵ Floyd McClung, *Seeing the City with the Eyes of God* (New York: Chosen Books, 1991), 10.

in the Bible as “foolish, disobedient, and led astray” (Titus 3:3). The Bible declares that this state of fallen ness and depravity to having their minds blinded by ‘the god of the world’ (2 Corinthians 4:4).³⁶ Furthermore, whole churches are being defeated and divided because ignorance and fear concerning spiritual warfare is rising in the city.

It is imperative to bring the knowledge of scripture to this issue of spiritual warfare because there are still a lack of resources on the subject and too little sermons on the subject of demons. We recognize that the world’s greatest problem is sin. But if we ignore or downplay the impact of Satan’s role in attacking and destroying lives, Satan’s cunning and craftiness in people’s lives, we are missing what God’s Word teaches us. We must view the social problems of the city in the context of spiritual warfare: poverty, unemployment, prostitution, substance addictions, loneliness, gang violence, guns, homelessness, AIDS, abused and abandoned children, sex, power and greed. How do all these relate to spiritual powers at work in the city? The Bible says, “we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).³⁷ God’s word is clear that demonic powers are at work and believers are engaged in spiritual warfare. “Demonic powers attack individuals, groups, institutions, structures and social mores in the city.”³⁸ What is so interesting regarding these terms that Paul uses—principalities, powers, rulers, dominions, authorities. As the literary genius and ambassador for Christ, the Apostle Paul writes in response to the general meaning of these terms is:

³⁶ Ibid, 20-21.

³⁷ McClung, 22.

³⁸ Ibid.

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39).³⁹

Physician Anderson Spickard challenges our cities and congregations to develop such spiritually transforming and empowering, healing ministries with addicted people. Drawing on his Christian faith and his long experience as medical director of the Vanderbilt University Institute for the Treatment of Addiction, he declares:

In my twenty-year of medical practice, few experiences have had a resurrection quality equal to that of watching alcoholics and their families leave behind the living death of addiction. Today, while much of the world staggers under the weight of chemical addiction, the church is called upon to be a vessel of this resurrection.⁴⁰

I am often reminded of the challenges Jesus' faced in his earthly ministry in the city. Jesus challenged his closest friends as he sent them out on their mission to be healers wherever they encountered human suffering and brokenness. One familiar story dramatizes the fundamental reason why Christians and their institutions should be involved in helping to prevent and heal. A powerful parable about the man who was beaten, robbed, and left terribly wounded beside the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. These same people are suffering through your town and mine beside today's Jericho roads. Historically, clergy and congregations have done much in the past, but the vast majority of clergy have hardly scratched the surface of their potential opportunities to lead their people to become 'servant churches' in the area of addictions. The need for

³⁹ Ibid, 23.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 433.

innovative alcohol and drug programs in the present global pandemic of addictions has never been greater.⁴¹

In the urban city of Brockton and all urban centers, drug addiction and addictions are alive and well. However, there is a real stigma associated with a person identifying himself or herself as an ex-anything in the church, especially an ex-addict and an ex-alcoholic. To reveal that one has used drugs compulsively, obsessively, and could not function without them usually puts those people who admit they suffer from addictions on a platform of being judged and marginalized by church members themselves. The addicted persons are incapable of dealing with reality, people, places, and things and most are unable to live life on life terms, as it needs to be lived. These people's lives become unmanageable due to the compulsion, cravings, and abuse of many substances like drugs, sex, and alcohol including behavioral addictions of money, gambling, shopping, working, etc.

DEFINING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR

Two important basic reactions occur when people take psychoactive drugs regularly, daily, and consistently—tolerance and dependence. These reactions are the essential characteristics of addictive behavior and are central, meaningful, to an understanding of addictions. The first reaction *tolerance* means that as people continue over a period of time to use a certain amount of psychoactive drug, the drug comes to have less and less of an effect on them. As the central nervous system adapts to the drug, a user requires larger and larger doses to achieve the same effect. It is inevitable that the person will need more and more of the stimulant or drug to get “high”. The phenomenon

⁴¹ Clinebell, 434.

of *tolerance* is believed to result from natural reactions of the body. The body reacts as if it knows the drug is a foreign substance, and so sets up defenses to counteract the effects of the drug.⁴²

“The second reaction that occurs is *dependence*. The phenomenon of *dependence*, which may be psychological and/or physical—indicates a need for a particular substance or activity so severe that intense physical or emotional disturbances result when that drug is withdrawn or the behavior (such as gambling) is stopped. When people are psychologically dependent, they have uncontrollable emotional cravings for a particular substance or activity. When deprived of it, they experience feelings of loss and uneasiness that border on the unbearable. We learned and experienced that these feelings are psychological withdrawal symptoms. A person typically develops a psychological dependence on an addictive activity as opposed to a psychoactive substance. For example, there are compulsive gamblers who are as psychologically dependent as any heroin addict is physically dependent to heroin. Many gamblers find it impossible to stop and give up gambling, even when it is leading them to personal, professional, and financial destruction and ruin. An organization called Gamblers Anonymous has been established to help these people, and it works exactly the same way Alcoholics Anonymous does.”⁴³

“On the other hand, physical withdrawal symptoms occur when people are deprived of a psychoactive drug on which they have become dependent. The withdrawal symptoms can involve nausea, vomiting, excessive perspiration, altered heartbeat and blood pressure, and bodily tremors called the shakes. Sometimes these physical symptoms are severe, and they can be life threatening. Likewise, alcohol depresses many physical processes, causing slurred speech, staggering, and mental dullness. Initially, when consuming alcohol such behaviors can be talkativeness, sociability, and lowering of inhibitions, but these ‘positive’ reactions quickly turn to the chemically depressing effects of the drug. When a heavy drinker is suddenly cut off from alcohol the withdrawal symptoms can have physiological stimulating effect and can lead to tension, sleep disorders, extreme anxiety, and bodily tremors. When people use a combination of drugs at the same time the phenomenon of withdrawal is intensified so severe and dangerous are the symptoms that can be life threatening.”⁴⁴

“The *addictive personality* term arose as a result of changing views on the causes of alcoholism. Psychoanalysis promoted personality as the major alternative to the

⁴² Cox and Snyder, 22.

⁴³ Cox and Snyder, 22-23.

⁴⁴ Cox and Snyder, 23-24.

“moral weakness” and “demonic drug” explanations of alcoholism. In fact, during the years of the end of Prohibition, the idea of an ‘alcoholic personality’ was widely accepted among psychoanalysts. They determined the personality to be unique to the alcoholic, and it was viewed as the sole cause of alcohol abuse. The alcoholic personality was also consistent with the disease concept of alcoholism. However, psychologists now recognize that the addictive personality—alcoholic or otherwise—is an overly simple concept, even misguided as the other single-cause explanations of alcoholism. We realize that it is a complex phenomenon, and there are many factors in addition to personality that explains the problem, treatment, and issues of addictions.”⁴⁵

“Some of the factors are: biological factors (inherited biochemical responses to psychoactive drugs) environmental (such as peer pressure), sociocultural factors that influence a person to drink heavily or moderately, and psychological factors other than personality (such as people’s expectations about the effects drugs will have on them). Any individual might be affected in varying degrees by any of these factors of addictions.”⁴⁶

“Once addiction to alcohol or other addictions set in, its victims are trapped in a vicious cycle of depression, anxiety, despair, and low-self esteem which they futilely and self-destructively attempt to manage by using ever-increasing amounts of the substance that caused so many problems in the first place.”⁴⁷ The meaning of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results. The behavior of addicts is such that it is insane.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 48.

⁴⁶ Cox and Snyder, 49.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

“Denial, coupled with a dread of the difficulties of withdrawal and the physical dynamics of tolerance and dependence, makes all forms of addiction very difficult to treat. That does not mean that we give up on ministering to the addict (because it could be anybody’s son or daughter, mother or father, aunt or uncle; God’s child; a human being deserving of help and love) so we are available to offer life-saving interventions, a safe place, and a place of recovery for those who are seeking dire help from addictions.”⁴⁸

CURRENT TRENDS AND TRUTHS ABOUT ADDICTIONS

According to an article entitled, “Drug War Facts”, which states the current drug use estimates in our country, the United States says “an estimated 112,085,000 Americans ages 12 or over (46.1% of the U.S. Population aged 12 and over) report having used an illicit drug at least once in their lifetime.”⁴⁹ “While an estimated 35,041,000 Americans ages 12 or over (14.4% of the US population aged 12 and over) used an illicit drug during the previous year.”⁵⁰ In addition, “an estimated 971 thousand Americans used crack cocaine in 1998. Of those, 462 thousand were white, 324 thousand were Black, and 157 thousand were Hispanic.”⁵¹ To see what is going on globally here are some interesting facts:

“Some 200 million people, or 5% of the world’s population age 15-64, have used drugs at least once in the last 12 months. This is 15 million people higher than last year’s estimate but remains significantly lower than the number of persons using licit psychoactive substances (about 30% of the general adult population use tobacco and about half use alcohol). The number of cannabis users worldwide is

⁴⁸ Ibid, 83.

⁴⁹ <http://www.drugwarfacts.org/druguse.htm1/11/2007>.

⁵⁰ Ibid. Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services, Results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (Rockville, MD: Office of Applied Studies, Sept. 2006), pp. 226, Table G.3 & p. 227, Table G.4.

⁵¹ Ibid. Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services, National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Population Estimates 1998 (Washington DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, 1999), pp. 37-39.

now close to 160 million people or 4% of the population age 15-64. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Unsurprisingly, the main problem drugs at the global level continue to be the opiates (notably heroin) followed by cocaine. For most of Europe and Asia, opiates continued to be the main problem drug, accounting for 62% of all treatment demand in 2003. In South-America, drug related treatment continued to be mainly linked to the abuse of cocaine (59% of all treatment demand). In Africa, the bulk of all treatment demand – as in the past – is linked to cannabis (64%) analysis of these responses suggests that overall drug consumption continues to spread at the global level.”⁵²

“The U.S. federal government spent over \$19 billion dollars in 2003 on the War on Drugs, at a rate of about \$600 per second. The budget has since been increased by over a billion dollars. State and local governments spent at least another 30 billion.”⁵³ Amazingly as well as for every dollar invested in drug treatment, 7 dollars are saved in health and social costs.”⁵⁴

Barry McCaffrey, head of the National Drug Policy Office, “overall drug use in America is down (50 percent in 1999) since 1979. Cocaine use has dropped 70 percent, and adolescent drug use has just turned the corner and is starting down,” he says. “When it comes to teens, if government figures can be believed, there has been a significant 13 percent drop in teen drug use from 1997 to 1998. The heart and soul of the drug strategy is prevention and education programs targeted at American adolescents.”⁵⁵

In an article, *Dealing With Addiction*, Barry McCaffrey says “as a nation we have made enormous progress in our efforts to reduce drug use and its consequences. Drug prevention and education campaigns have been successful. In the past 15 years, we have reduced the number of illicit drug users by 50 percent. But the consequences of illegal

⁵² Ibid. Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Drug Report 2005 (Vienna, Austria: UNODC, June 2005), pp. 5-6. 1/11/2007.

⁵³ National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University: “Shoveling Up: The Impact of Substance Abuse on State Budgets,” January 2001.

<http://www.drugsense.org/wodclock.htm> 1/11/2007.

⁵⁴ http://ww.who.int/substance_abuse/facts/en/ 11/24/04.

⁵⁵ <http://www.cnn.com/US9909/09/drug.war/1/11/2007>.

drug use remain unacceptably high. Currently we have 3.6 million Americans who are addicted to illegal drugs. Of those, 2.7 million are hard-core addicts who consume 80 percent of the illegal drugs in America. There is no doubt that substance abuse is our biggest national health problem. Between 13 and 24 percent of Americans suffer from substance-abuse disorders sometimes in their lives, making this the most prevalent of all psychiatric disorders in the United States.”⁵⁶

“The most alarming drug trend is the increasing use of illegal drugs, tobacco, and alcohol among youth, although it has not returned to the near-epidemic levels of the late 1970s. Still, we cannot stand idly by and allow drug use by our children to continue to rise.”⁵⁷

The benefits of treatment for addicts is financially beneficial and holistically a wise judgment for those who suffer from addictions and to those who minister to alcoholics, substance abusers, and other addictions. President George Bush spoke these words in his ‘State of the Union Address’ in regards to the War on Drugs:

“Another cause of hopelessness is addiction to drugs. Addiction crowds out friendship, ambition, moral conviction, and reduces all the richness of life to a single destructive desire. As a government, we are fighting illegal drugs by cutting off supplies and reducing demand through anti-drug education programs. Yet for those already addicted, the fight against drugs is a fight for their lives. Too many Americans in search of treatment cannot get it. So tonight I propose a new \$600-million program to help an additional 300,000 Americans receive treatment over the next three years. Our nation is blessed with recovery programs that do amazing work. One of them is found at the ‘Healing Place Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A man in the program said, “God does miracles in people’s lives, and you never think it could be you.” Tonight, let us bring to all Americans who struggle with drug addiction this message of hope. The miracle of recovery is possible, and it could be you.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgc/0697/ijge/gj-1.htm> 1/11/2007.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov.stateoftheunionaddress/NSDUH/2k5NSDUH/htm>, 1/11/2007.

A person whose life has been ravished by addiction and substance abuse usually feels hopeless, unloved, uncared for and live as outcasts. If treatment, intervention, and recovery from their addictions are not sought, the person only has three or four options according to Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous and other 12 step programs and experts in the field of addictions: jails, institutions, dereliction, and death. Addiction causes a separation of the person (a) from her/his true self, a term widely used in 12 step program circles as ‘spiritual estrangement’ a person functions only on worldly fleshly consciousness, and he/she becomes God, self-will, living yet walking as a dead man. The self that is not free to exercise healthy choices in matters of behavior and attachment, compulsion is taken away from the self. The person is also separated from (b) meaningful, loving, interpersonal relationships; unable to freely choose healthy relationships with other people; and (c) from God, however God is understood.⁵⁹

“Drug Abuse and other addictions is an equal opportunity destroyer. The effects of addiction reach across the lifespan, across cultures, and across genders. Many chronic conditions such as diabetes, depression, hypertension, and asthma require continual care in order for treatment benefits to be sustained. Addiction is similar to other chronic diseases in this regard. It requires monitoring of patient status on a regular basis, early intervention regarding possible problems, and proper referrals in order to maintain positive treatment effects.”⁶⁰

“An estimated 4 out of 10 U.S. AIDS deaths are related to drug abuse. The portion of AIDS cases related to drug abuse has steadily increased over the course of the past two decades and intravenous drug use continues to be a major contributing cause to the

⁵⁹ http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/facts/en/ p. 1 of 2. 11/24/04.

⁶⁰ <http://www.nida.nih.gov/about/welcome/aboutdrugabuse/treatment>, 1/11/2007.

increase in new cases. Studies have shown that drug treatment can dramatically reduce the rate at which people acquire HIV.”⁶¹

Literature on the issue of substance abuse and addictions is sacred material to those who seek education, awareness, and understanding about an addict or addictions from those who are addicts, to those who are in recovery from addictions, and by others with expertise in the field. The NA fellowship believes that addicts suffer from an incurable disease of the body, mind, and spirit. They believe addicts are in the grip of a hopeless dilemma, the solution of which is spiritual and educational in nature.

We find this to be our experience in seeking recovery from addictions and in helping others to be free from addictions. We discovered how sin separates us from God and sin is a form of rebellion where we worship idol gods over the true and living God of the Holy Scriptures. The passion I have for a ministry of compassion, hope, and love is key to restoration of the addict along with presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ to set the captives free from bondages of any and all kinds of sin-sicknesses, but particularly addictions. It is a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Narcotics Anonymous believes, as many of us do, that one does not choose to become an addict. When we are born from our mother’s womb, it is neither God’s plan nor ours to become derelicts or addicts literally living in a path of poverty, sickness, homelessness, and destruction. We suffer from an addiction that expresses itself in ways that are anti-social and that makes detection, diagnosis, and treatment difficult.

“The addiction problem is chronic, progressive, and fatal, so to gain insight into the complex issue of addiction we must help one another. Some define addiction as using drugs and alcohol, and other substances or compulsive behavior without

⁶¹ Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002. Metzger et al., 1993. <http://www.nida.gov/about/welcome/aboutdrugabuse/treatment>, /1/11/2007.

the ability to stop using these substances of one's own free will. Obsessive behavior is a common denominator for addictive people.”⁶²

Though there are many detoxification centers and safe havens operating for the cause of rehabilitation of addicts and addictions of all sorts, where does the church’s role come into play? What programs or plans have churches instituted to become a light in the communities in which we live today? There is an enormous use of prescription drug users in our nation, and there are complex addiction problems in our country. In 2005, the Cape Cod area reported an increase in heroine overdoses and now the prescription drug oxycontin is replacing the illegal use of heroin.

Even if the form of substance changes throughout the years, addiction must be treated and we realize there is a spiritual remedy for its arrest, treatment, and eradication from those who suffer from addictions. Alarming are the reports today concerning methamphetamine labs cropping up inside homes in Texas, the Midwest, and Ohio where more federal aid will be allotted to help children, youth, adults, kick the nasty habit of meth smoking, and in aid to the law enforcement agencies. Meth is a highly addictive drug and destroys the lives of many families and addicts and it is reported that meth addicts who seek treatment will usually seek recovery four to five times before attempts to stay clean and sober.

The new television program “Intervention” is now seeing a huge audience who want help to free those in the grips of addiction, whether it is gambling, substance abuse, etc. The show depicts real life families and individuals whose lives are caught up in the perils of addiction where there seems no hope only death and destruction, severe suffering and pain for the family. Intervention is necessary for the addictive person. The

⁶² *Narcotics Anonymous, fifth Ed.* World Service Office, Inc. Van Nuys, CA. 1982, 7, 77.

involvement of close family relationships expressing candidly their feelings of hurt, sadness, and urgent cries of help for the addict to receive treatment is life changing and moments of great challenges to all involved in the intervention meetings. Spiritual development is a part of the process of bringing confessions, hope, and a surrender of one's will over to God.

Spiritual development is the key to live out the truth of God's Word and applying the truth of the Word of God to an addict's life. The foundation to an addictions ministry for the church must take into account that transformation of the mind, heart, and soul must be changed through Jesus Christ. Practical application is not enough but dealing with the root causes of inner conflicts is critical in spiritual development and maturity. A learning process and understanding the process must be taught in a safe, warm environment. The goal of this ministry of compassion, hope, healing, empowerment, and love is to use small groups and instructional classes geared to deal with a person's spiritual maturity, growth, and development. Addiction and divine intervention is rooted in spiritual development of the addict in an addictions ministry. Ministering to people who suffer from addictions cannot be effective without the dynamic of spiritual development, biblical and theological studies, worship, fellowship, and a personal relationship with God.

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN EMPOWERMENT AND HEALING OF ADDICTIONS

"One in every six people (depending on whose numbers you choose to believe) is struggling with some form of addiction." In his book, *There's A Spiritual Solution To Every Problem*, Author Wayne W. Dyer saw--through situations, circumstances, and the

problems of life--that staying connected to God was the spiritual foundation and solution to the problem.”

I have experienced and learned that facilitating spiritual growth is the central and the most unique contribution of clergy and congregations to all dimensions of the problems related to addictions. The development of intervention and strategies that include spiritual and ethical healing and nurture was demonstrated in one New England town. The need for treatment is to be readily available. In 1909, a book was published entitled, *The Emmanuel Movement* in a New England Town. Its author was Layman P. Powell, another leader in the Emmanuel Movement, issued this still relevant challenge to churches:

“whatever plan it followed, it would seem to be a calamity which the church need not add to her many other lost opportunities, to allow the cure and care of the drunkard to fall entirely into the hands of science, which admittedly needs all the help that faith in God can give in dealing with an ill so largely spiritual as the excessive use of alcohol.”⁶³

It’s an impressive demonstration of how life-affirming theology can help addicted people. Pastoral psychotherapy provided opportunities to deal with the root psychological and spiritual causes of addictions, and mediate God’s grace-full acceptance, thus enhancing both self-acceptance and acceptance of others. It brought healing, not by encouraging surrender to an external deity, but by resolving inner conflict, thus releasing God-given strengths and resources within persons.⁶⁴

This is similar to the goal of this project of a holistic healing center approach to help burdened and addicted people. There is no clear definition to this ‘life-affirming theology’ but what we do to the least of them you do also to Jesus Christ. Giving life,

⁶³ Clinebell, 437.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

love, hope, justice, value, health, wealth, freedom, employment, medical, physical, and spiritual needs leads to the ‘shalom of the city’ for all its citizens.

Treatment and intervention can work. “Research has revealed a number of basic principles that underlie effective drug addiction treatment, as highlighted in NIDA’s Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide. Here are some principles of treatment:

- No single treatment is appropriate for all individuals.
- Treatment must attend to multiple needs of the individual, not just drug use.
- Multiple courses of treatment may be required for success.
- Remaining in treatment for an adequate period of time is critical for treatment effectiveness.
- Drug addiction can be effectively treated with behavior-based therapies and, for some drugs, such as heroin or nicotine, with medications.”⁶⁵

For many other addictions this behavior-based therapy approach is effective treatment for addicts. The basic mission of the Christian life and of congregations is to enable persons to develop life in all its fullness (John 10:10). The church is the refuge for us who live in fear and in a hostile environment in our cities and in our work, especially for those who suffer from sickness, diseases, broken relationships, generational curses, unhealthy love-relationships, HIV, sexual abuse, domestic violence, hurt, shame, and guilt, despair and pain, and addictions; the church will be the first place where weary travelers and people will come to renew and restore their relationship with God in the 21st century. The church should and will be the first place many seek for safety and help, to seek God, to look for a better way of life, though this is not always the case. There are many other agendas or programs being implemented without a careful thought or plan concerning the flock of God. God said his people are dying for lack of knowledge.

⁶⁵ <http://www.nida.nih.gov/about/welcome/aboutdrugabuse/treatment>, 1/11/2007.

Where else in our communities than the local church are we better equipped to minister God's life and God's power in the world to all people? God is sovereign. The Creator is concerned about His Word going forth and not returning to Him void. God wants us all to choose life not death. I looked at an approach worth visiting here in the project in implementing spiritual development in an addictions ministry.

"The marketing and facilitating state assistance for the drug treatment epidemic was the initial phase of this program. Senior Pastor Alfred Young, Jr. of Faith Bible Church of Covington, Louisiana, founded a drug and alcohol ministry in a community infested with addictions, drugs, alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, chronic unemployment, excessive high school dropouts, warring street gangs, drug dealings and so forth. The community is extremely limited in its resources, and so is the new church. 'So what?' you say. Sounds like every day in lots of urban communities. Where's the blessing from the topic? How can it help my church, and my class, group, career, or work? The blessing is biblical substance abuse counseling, and if you want to know the how, what, why, who, keep reading as I share the story of the transformation of one church and community from the devastation of substance abuse and show how to do it through biblical counseling."⁶⁶

The impact and awareness that this model brings to my ministry for addicts whether it be an addiction to substance abuse, drug abuse, sex, work, ideas is my hearts desire in the addictions ministry of the biblical counseling approach. The spiritual development involves inspiration to bring about liberation for those addicts through biblical counseling. So let's examine Mr. Young's approach to the problem of substance abuse:

- “1) A nightly support group was formed, a contract built around Philippians 4:13 was signed, and a commitment was made to learn and live the Bible as the handbook for recovery.
- 2) No meetings were cancelled for any reason, including birthdays, Christmas, and other holidays.
- 3) Nightly Bible studies were held that approached addiction as a sin problem along with serious accountability for time, money, and relationships.

⁶⁶ June & Black, *Counseling in African-American Communities*, p. 68.

- 4) We established a framework for resolving conflicts, addressing concerns, and solving problems. We would not concentrate on what was fair, but rather on what was biblical.
- 5) Each session would open and close with prayer. Men agreed to pray with and for each other during the day.”⁶⁷

“The theoretical approach was a paradigm that drug addiction was the result of a spiritual problem; the answer, Jesus Christ. If people accepted Christ, applied the Word of God, and allowed the Holy Spirit to control their decisions and day-to-day choices, they would experience not just rehabilitation but re-creation and recovery. In other words, concrete biblical change.”⁶⁸

“The program expanded to an intensive one-year residency program from a 90-day program. Included in the approach were life-skills training class, occupational speakers, finance class, professionals were brought in to assess clients’ aptitudes, temperaments, personalities, and a plan of advancement, administrative buildings, classrooms, gymnasium, materials, and land acquisition. Counseling reference tools were used and family and premarital counseling was implemented. There was a men’s house and across the street a women’s house.”⁶⁹

“This is a very structured and interrelated program of treatment. Other churches in our community and around the country visit with us to study and implement what God has done here. Two African delegations of representatives from countries with similar problems have also visited and studied the programs. They were convinced that the programs and principles are transferable to anyone. God has used Dr. Willie Richardson of Christian Stronghold Baptist Church in Philadelphia as our mentor in counseling, discipleship, and family ministry. Dr. Jay Adam’s books and materials have been our basic resource tools. The recidivism rate is very low. The primary reason for this is that biblical counseling seeks and provides solutions to the problems and behavior that people have. It is solution focused. Most other counseling is therapy focused. The differing end results are practical solutions or permanent therapy.”⁷⁰

Moreover this report includes the author’s personal experiences, her husband’s, and the learning team at Mt. Moriah Baptist Church where we initiated bible study,

⁶⁷ June & Black, 71.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 74.

⁷⁰ June & Black, pp. 74-77.

worship, and recovery to other addicts and non-addicts all in the same biblical studies/counseling group. We witnessed amazing miracles in this group and the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We give all the glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit that enables and empowers us to bring hope and recovery revealing the ministry of reconciliation, compassion, and salvation that is most needed in an addictions ministry. Reconciliation removes the destruction of sin and renders it powerless, so implications for ministry along with systemic theology, theological and biblical studies, and personal reflections will be drawn from this process.

“Jesus Christ, my Liberator and Redeemer modeled the holistic behavior and lifestyle towards those suffering from bondages and addictions by being able to show them compassion, healing them, comforting them, empowering them and delivering those people whose lives are in shambles from addiction. The gospel involves holistic and spiritual healing; “a process of reconnection to the true self, others, and God.”⁷¹

The grace of God has transformed many people whose lives were addicted or estranged by their addictions. The same grace has changed many people’s lives that remain sober and vigilant in order to refrain from their addiction and to make a difference in the life of others. As a result of yielding to the grace of God and submitting their lives to God they have found peace in God, love in God, and trust in God, for security. Many have found freedom from their addiction in the presence of God and a deep personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

An addict finds that hitting rock bottom means the addiction is a matter of life and death. The emotional, spiritual, psychological, and mental condition is grave where dire medical attention is inevitable. This chronic disease of addictions is a phenomenon as the

⁷¹ Robert Bayley. *Addictions and Grace*. Total Health Communications, Oct. 1989.

addictive person experiences a wide variety of negative feelings and behavior. Most of them, if not all, are in need of “spiritual intensive care” and the proper medication must be applied to their condition. We acknowledge that relapse is possible and sometimes a part of an addicts’ recovery is to come to terms with his malady. As biblical addictions counselors we must carefully minister and articulate the triggers, the signs before we proceed to ‘remove the veil’, (deal with the sin factor), doing truth, and other spiritual matters.

“Our addictions are our worst enemies. They enslave us with chains that are of our own making, and yet that, paradoxically, are virtually beyond our control.”⁷² We know that mere willpower and understanding will not be enough for transformation of a life of addictions.

“Addiction also makes idolaters of us all because it forces us to worship these objects of attachment, thereby preventing us from truly, freely loving God and one another. Furthermore, addiction breeds willfulness within us, yet on the contrary, it erodes our free will and eats away at our dignity. Addiction, then, is at once an inherent part of our nature and an antagonist of our nature. It is the absolute enemy of human freedom, the antipathy of love. Yet, in still another paradox, our addictions can lead us to a deep appreciation of grace. They can bring us to our knees and to our death. Grace is where our hope lies.”⁷³

“We believe ‘Grace’ is the most powerful force in the universe.”⁷⁴ It will not be mere instruction and understanding of addiction that will deliver us from an addictive cycle but thorough knowledge, wisdom, biblical studies training, and substance abuse education of the addictive personality, and addictions help us to appreciate **grace**. Addiction is not something that will go away with willpower or wishful thinking, for it is in the very nature of addiction to feed on our attempts to master it. Those who had

⁷² May, *Addiction & Grace*, p. 4.

⁷³ Ibid, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁴ Bayley, 1of 4.

overcome serious addictions to alcohol and other drugs had their lives literally turned around so dramatically they described some sort of spiritual experience. Although professional treatment was appreciative it was made clear it had something to do with turning to God. Furthermore, there is no single explanation why some people are more vulnerable to addiction than others. There is a distinct difference in personality characteristics of alcoholics and other substance abusers before they began to abuse.⁷⁵

“Addiction taps into the most fundamental human processes. Whether the need to be high, to be sexual, to eat, or even to work—the addictive process can turn creative, life-giving energy into a destructive, demoralizing compulsion. The central loss is the addict’s values and relationships.”⁷⁶

“Obsessive-compulsive behavior patterns usually involve common human activities that no addicted people can take or leave, or choose to do in moderation. Victims of obsessive-compulsive behavior are caught in increasingly all-consuming fixations on certain activities that gradually take more and more of their attention and energy as these fixations control larger and larger areas of their lives. Their mental health, intimate relationships, and fiscal viability are diminished as their addictions gain increasing power over their lives.”⁷⁷

Dr. Cline bell writes about our addiction-spawning society in these words:

“...almost any human activity that people may find satisfying, exciting, numbing or distracting from the anxieties of everyday life can become the focus of obsessive thinking and compulsive action. Obsessive-compulsive patterns proliferate in the lives of millions of people causing them to lose voluntary control in certain areas. The most widespread and destructive activity addictions include those centering on the misuse of work, sex, gambling, shopping, codependent relationships, sports, religion, money, and power. But evidence of

⁷⁵ Cox and Snyder, 83.

⁷⁶ Clinebell, p.119. source: Patrick Carnes, *The Sexual Addiction*.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

addictions to a wide variety of other activities have appeared in the popular media—for example, addictions to traveling, collecting certain items, chain letters, and being a pack rat. The forces driving these addictions become so powerful that victims do not (and probably cannot) interrupt them in spite of their becoming increasingly destructive to their overall values and well being. The dynamics and causes of different behavioral addictions, like those of substance addictions, are complex and only partially understood. From the perspective of depth psychology, addictive activities are repeated almost endlessly in vain attempts to satisfy deep inner conflicts and emotional hungers of which victims are dimly aware or utterly unaware.

Addictive behaviors seem to be efforts to deal with threatening feelings of angst, both neurotic and existential. Consequently, they may go to great lengths to avoid having to interrupt the behaviors.”⁷⁸

The presence of the Church in the city in its fight against addictions and substance abuse and to the powers that have their hold on people is at an end. The Church is a sign of God’s redeeming grace. Our presence in a neighborhood is a living witness of Christ’s power to conquer any bondage. No wonder the demons tremble when the church moves in. There are those of us who understand the spirits of the city and the urban mission of the Church, it is confirmation of Christ’s victory, to set the captives free.⁷⁹

The church must be willing to examine this issue of our character that drive who we are and how we relate to God and others. Taking an honest inventory of how we see ourselves for who we are so we can identify those areas in our lives where Satan gets a foothold and encourages negative behavior. There are many questions we must ask ourselves. The fact is we are imperfect creatures tied to a lifeline of confession and repentance to bring true peace and satisfaction in our lives. The challenge is then to continue through prayer, devotion, confession, and meditation on his word as sinners in

⁷⁸ Clinebell, pp. 120-121.

⁷⁹ McClung, 150.

need of a savior.⁸⁰ We are to be a voice of courage for the discouraged. “We can either smother the divine fire of youth, or we may feed it. We may either stand stupidly staring as it sinks into a murky fire of crime and flares into the intermittent blaze of folly, or we may tend it into a lambent flame with power to make clean and bright our dingy city streets.—Jane Addams, American social worker.

⁸⁰ June, Lee and Sabrina Black. *Counseling in African-American Communities: Biblical Perspectives on Tough Issues*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 58-59.

PART 2: CONCEPTUALIZATION

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW - RESOURCES OF HEALING AND EMPOWERMENT IN ADDICTIONS MINISTRY

FOUNDATIONAL AND SUBSIDIARY LITERATURE RESOURCES IN ADDICTIONS MINISTRY

We will now review some of the foundational literature used in the thesis project.

The majority of the literature foundational to the project is first, Peter Senge's, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Business Organization*. For long term results in our ministry in Addictions is important to learn strategic interventions in its implementation of the ministry in the city, churches, and to the various connectedness to Christians and to people who suffer from substance abuse with a view of scriptures, and the foundation of the Spirit.

The foundational literature important to the project included the works of Eldin Villafaña, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic*, that has confirmed and interrelated the relationships in the addictions ministry learning about social ethics, the liberating Spirit, biblical and theological foundations, then we have the comprehensive works of Howard Clinebell, *Understanding and Counseling Persons with Alcohol, Drug, and Behavioral Addictions*, in addition to this foundation is 'grace' that frames the biblical and spiritual missions to those who suffer from addictions in the book by Dr. Gerald May, *Addictions & Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions* where relationships in the addictions ministry can grow through grace, and scriptures applicable to frame the issues of spiritual

development in addictions ministry. The literature combination of the article, ‘Thru the Veil’, and the book, Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* are effective tools involved in the addictions ministry of long-term missions to spiritually develop people and the upbuilding of the kingdom of God in an addictions ministry and in the Church.

The Subsidiary Literature Sources, included in the bibliography, help to expand our knowledge on biblical perspectives in learning teams and in urban ministry. When dealing with tough issues, like addictions, urban churches are definitely challenged by lack of knowledge in the biblical and spiritual foundation of those issues. Practical application of the intervention strategies is necessary to do missions in urban communities that requires ‘urban practitioners’ above all, ‘systems thinkers’ who work towards the redemptive model of humanity bearing in mind we view urban issues through the heart, mind, and eyes of God.

The literature we find in Peter Senge’s, *The Fifth Discipline*, is one of the most influential and treasured discoveries for the thesis-project. When we seek to do ministry in the urban centers in which we live we are confronted with complex issues for complex times involving complex solutions. It is in the Chapter 5, the author describes in ‘A Shift of Mind’, to see the world anew:

There is something in all of us that loves to put together a puzzle that loves to see the image of the whole emerge. The beauty of a person, or a flower, or a poem lies in seeing all of it. It is interesting that the words, “whole” and “health” come from the same root (the Old English *hal*, as in “hale and hearty”). So it should come as no surprise that the unhealthiness of our world today is in direct proportion to our inability to see it as a whole.⁸¹

⁸¹ Senge, 68.

The discipline for systems thinking is seeing the wholes. This is needed so much because our world is becoming overwhelmed by complexities. “And systems thinking is a sensibility—for the interconnectedness that gives living systems their unique character.”⁸² This is crucial to exploring and developing a holistic and redemptive addictions ministry and propose to the church that we must respond now. Senge continues that complexity certainly undermines confidence and responsibility—as in the frequent refrain, “It’s all too complex for me,” or “There’s nothing we can do. It’s the system.” These statements foster ‘systems thinking’ to this sense of helplessness and powerlessness that many feel as we enter the 21st century. So many centers for rehabilitation and detoxification of drug rehabs, are going out of business and the need for treatment centers is great and great is the need for those seeking help.

“Systems’ thinking is called the ‘fifth discipline’ because it is the cornerstone that underlies all of the five learning disciplines. These learning disciplines are cornerstone of how learning organizations think about their world. All are concerned with a shift of mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating their future to foster healing and to foster health. Our mission is to see anew the healing and suffering needed in the lives of those who suffer from addictions.”⁸³

“The learning disciplines of systems thinking, a shared vision, mental models, team learning, and personal mastery are all interconnected ‘a changed mind’. “The word, ‘metanoia’ means a shift of mind. This is what unfolds in a learning organization according to Senge and others who have had experiences on a learning team. Likewise,

⁸² Ibid, 69.

⁸³ Senge, 69.

the word involves the same meaning as ‘learning’ for learning involves a fundamental shift or movement of important fundamental tools in our work with addictions.”⁸⁴

The church as a counter-community is the primary social system through which the gospel works to change other structures. The research and works by Stephen Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*, are paramount to this body of investigations in the thesis project proposal. God has called us to be ‘the light of the world’ and neglect of this new life in Christ places the mission of the church in jeopardy. We share together the life-giving promise as a people who are by faith members of the family of Abraham and heirs of God’s favor (Rom 4; Gal. 3). “Only in association with the whole people of God is there life for the individual. Outside of this company there is only lonely and hopeless wandering in the wilderness.”⁸⁵ The occurring theme in these pages reflects and brings needed understanding on ethical subjects as evil, grace, love, justice, and we learn concrete methods of social change, including evangelizing, including the biblical basis for impacting moral conduct in our communities.

The author Floyd McClung challenges our views in his book, *Seeing the City with the Eyes of God*, with rich and powerful simplicity to help in our view of our cities. His perspective is to see the city as God’s loved city. Every family is called to live out the journey a lifestyle of service to bring great joy in our calling from God. The commitment to the calling empowers and pushes us all to do the work of the Lord in our neighborhoods and our communities. The view of the city is rooted in theological understanding of the city and firmly rooted in biblical truth. Likewise, we look in God’s Word for our responses to the complex issues in our city.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 13.

⁸⁵ Stephen Mott. *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*. (New York: Oxford Press), 1982, 128.

The author of two prolific and relevant subjects regarding urban ministry is the author, Dr. Eldin Villafaña, *Seek the Peace of the City*, and *The Liberating Spirit*. The first is a must read for those of us seeking peace for the city. Professor Villafaña reminds us of the important of both the educational and the church's role of the central role of the Holy Spirit. Christianity resides in a world of contending views of life and exploding cities. There are both destructive and the healing powers that the Spirit of God lets loose in the cities. I've learned candid details on practical application of urban ministry, and I better understand the mission field(s).

In the book, *Seeking the Peace of the City*, Villafaña writes, “contextualization means many things to many people”. He continues to describe biblical insights into the concept of contextualization. For this thesis-report, it makes sense to make a commitment to the Shalom of the city. The city, as a context of training and ministry, is looked upon as a positive center of God’s redemptive activity. Proper insight into a holistic gospel is presented that emphasizes both evangelism and social justice in the seeking of the Shalom of the city (Jer. 29:7). Our desire is to become a redemptive model of ministry to the people suffering from addictions.⁸⁶ On account of this great work, we reflect on these words from the book:

“We neither despair of our city, nor dare we romanticize its possibilities. We nevertheless move on, amid storms and trials, carrying and seeking the shalom of the city. And seek the shalom (peace) of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the shalom (peace) thereof shall ye have shalom (peace) (Jer. 29:7) Armed with a burning patience, informed by the reality of sin and grace, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we can indeed be a witness to and a reality of the splendid city.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Villafaña, *Seek the Peace of the City*, 82.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 45.

In *The Liberating Spirit* it is reflective of his own personal experiences as a Pentecostal theologian that provides cultural and religious reality in expressions of our faith journey. It is in the scope of the project, our mission to love the unlovable and often ostracized, marginalized, and the poor in spirit, that we embrace a social spirituality founded on what his book vividly portrays in the social ethics that it manifests from its experiences of the Spirit. “The love of God in Jesus Christ poured out by the Spirit begins the spiritual pilgrimage (Rom. 5:5). This love becomes the source, motive, and power of the living in the Spirit. It is this transforming experience of love that challenges us to seek ‘in obedience to God to follow Jesus in the power of the Spirit’.”⁸⁸

The challenge we learn and seek to manifest is the knowledge that we are wrestling against spiritual power encounters against sin and evil. As we understand addictions and the addictive person, the church is unaware of engaging in a bitter struggle—spiritual power encounters. He cautions us to see this struggle not individualistically, which many will insinuate on behalf of causes of addictions, however, it corresponds with the geography of evil – the sinful and evil structures of society.⁸⁹

“Awareness of this demonic struggle is vital, it means: The church must bring to bear, through our witness and labors, the power of the Spirit to break the chains of hate, hostility, and injustice embedded in them by introducing the values of the Reign of God (i.e., love, justice, fair play) and setting in place a ‘chain of change’ that immediately (thus, radical change – revolution), or gradually (thus, multiple and cumulative amelioration – reformation) humanizes these structures and institutions. The church must witness to the demonic powers that lie behind the scene....this witness must be in the power of the Spirit, armed with the ‘full armor of God’ (Eph. 6: 10-18).”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Villafaña, *The Liberating Spirit*, 193-194.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 201.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 201-202.

It is these structures and institutions in our society that these books by Eldin Villafaña that will help us tremendously individually and collectively in our urban missions.

The resource by Nile Harper, ‘*Urban Churches, Vital Signs*’ is clearly insightful to project and examine models of ministry in the contemporary church. The book inspires hope and encourages us all to struggle for justice in our communities. It dethrones the myth that city churches can barely survive in the evil society in which we live. The illustrative examples of churches in the United States that the author depicts are refreshing to proposed ministries. The models of church ministry in the world have transformed individuals, neighborhoods and churches against great odds and opposition. We learn from these pages how to transform our thinking in doing ministry in our local church and cities with a crucial role of theology, worship, pastoral leadership, partnerships, racial identity, family life, and new patterns of funding in how to do urban ministry intervention. These are real concerns to my own goal of proposing an addictions ministry when we look at the costs of doing ministry and models of ministry that already exists.⁹¹

The author Harper writes in regards to the ‘Central Presbyterian Church’ as an example of their current mission statement, “We come to [the church] as a wellspring, bringing our thirst and emptiness, only to discover that our cup is filled by the living Word who sends us to be with those in need, and to call forth God’s justice in a chaotic world.”⁹² Congregations can begin combining the church and the community interdependence in partners in efforts for the redevelopment and revitalization of the city

⁹¹ Nile Harper, Comments by V. Bruce Rigdon, President of Ecumenical Theological Seminary to the work of Nile Harper.

⁹² Ibid, 93.

to serve as a basic source of strength is unity with others. “The personal is the pastoral is the political.”⁹³

The many intricate details we often take for granted in urban ministry are clearly examined in the giant literary work of Robert C. Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan* particularly those involving spiritual warfare. The principles and practices of ministry in complex urban settings sets the tone of applying what we know when the ‘rubber meets the road’. In dealing with addictions, there are underlying causes why people choose to continue to use drugs even when there is danger and destruction in their lives. Our self-will is not under submission to God’s will so these other spirits of the will our dark and demonic presences.

Through biblical characters, biblical studies, and the gospel of Jesus Christ our vision is to be a prophetic witness in the 21st century. In an Addictions ministry with a focus of spiritual development and empowerment, Linthicum says, “biblical theology for an urban methodology needs collective wisdom from those who have also have in the darkness seen a great light”. What a powerful witness we are to be in these dark and evil days. We find a wealth of biblical knowledge from the book and simple reflective concepts that confirm what Jesus says, “be followers of me”. To do truth in our ministry is to be a follower of Jesus Christ who is the truth and we are compelled to stand firm on this foundation in helping those who suffer from addictions to evangelize, transform, restore, and heal.

The new methodology for doing urban ministry must be conformed to a theology as urban as our sociology and missiology—a theology that is, as Linthicum and Ray Bakke put it: “as big as the city itself”. The prophet Jeremiah faced confronting systemic

⁹³ Harper, 283.

evil in his ministry. Linthicum gives great insight into Jeremiah's journey as a messenger of God in King Josiah days, [pp. 61-62]. Many political powers, economic leadership, and religious establishments use their authority for the city of God; if not, it becomes used for the city of Satan. The knowledge of systems producing and operating as evil systems is so vital in knowing God's plan for the city are central to transformation of our cities and redemption of humanity.⁹⁴ The call to empowerment and healing our urban and global cities and churches, reads here systemically and biblically sound doctrine to set us forth toward a practical application for urban ministry.

A.W. Tozier, in his book entitled, '*Glorify His Name*', Alfred Edersheim in, '*The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*', including the author, David DePia's in his article, "Thru The Veil" are key works in the great revelation of the completion of God's redemptive work through His Son, Jesus Christ. The impact and revelation through the interrelatedness of the body of Christ and the gospel of Jesus Christ, his work on the Cross, are of great significance to the thesis-project. To observe the symbols and significance of the temple, and its furniture, we come to see the glory of God and bask in his presence. We praise the Lord knowing His redemptive work on the behalf of all people.

A disciplined life by the Spirit-filled Christian and the Holy Spirit as our guide is the new life we now have in Christ Jesus. We are commanded to seek His face and to dwell in the presence of God. How does the church continue to practice the presence of God in a dark world? What ministry and training needs to develop in order for us to practice God's presence in our lives? How can we bring others, believers and non-believers, to empower those to continue to grow spiritually mature and set others free

⁹⁴ Linthicum, 62.

from bondages? What ministry developments or changes does the church need to make in order to save our children, our city, and our communities and to bring redemption to humanity in the 21st century? We are given invaluable insights into the theological and biblical ethics and purposes of God in these works.

In “Thru The Veil” Depina explains how the temple shows clearly the separation between God and man—an impenetrable barrier--which is the ‘torn curtain or the veil of the temple.⁹⁵ Edersheim writes, “Now we know that for this cause Jesus Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that, death having take place for the propitiation of the transgressions under the first covenant, they which have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15).”⁹⁶

It is but for the saving grace of God that any one of us are alive. This holds true for those who are suffering from addictions, poor, ostracized, marginalized, captive, and in any kind of bondage. We can never know our true identity or any of God’s provisions until we know Jesus Christ and knowledge of God the Father. The ‘removing the veil’ concept shows a comparison of the barrier of sin that separates us from a personal intimate relationship with God.

“On the subject of addictions, *Understanding and Counseling Persons with Alcohol, Drug, and Behavioral Addictions*, influences much of the research and data. Howard Clinebell, PhD brings head and heart understanding of addictive problems and recovery. The person, Bill Wilson, cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous, a major spiritual pioneer in the twentieth century impacted some of the vision involved in his studies on addictions. Other noted contributors to this material have been Paul Tillich, Marty Mann, Dr. Anderson Spickard, Jr., E. Mansell Pattison, alcoholics, Harry Tibeout who served as psychotherapist for the founding members of AA, numerous alcoholics on Skid Row in New York City, the Bowery Rescue Mission, Salvation Army’s Harbor Light Mission learning

⁹⁵ <http://www.goodnewsarticle.com/May01-1.htm>, 3 of 11.

⁹⁶ Edersheim, 267, (adopted the rendering of Dean Alford, div. From Authorized Version).

about the triple entrapment of homelessness, addictions, and often mental illnesses.”⁹⁷

Many insights come from his keen interest in alcoholics and the drug addicted. This furthered studies into a doctoral dissertation at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary on a comparative study of five religious approaches to alcoholism. The insights are invaluable and well beyond my hopes for relevant data on the subject of addictions and spirituality. Many professionals working in the field of addictions at the Betty Ford Addiction Center, Vanderbilt University Institute for the Treatment of Addiction, and those involved in medicine, religious studies, seminarians, pastors, pastoral counselors, and an abundant resource of contributors widening the window of understanding of the complex dynamics of suffering, psychotherapy, and religion. There were seventy-nine recovering alcoholics who supplied detail information of nearly every aspect of their lives.⁹⁸

This book is for those who want help in understanding and dealing constructively with persons suffering from alcoholism and other drug addictions, as well as those struggling with obsessive-compulsive behavior patterns often called “process addictions” or “behavioral addictions”. All addictions are complex psychosocial-spiritual illnesses. The book aims at helping persons who have the opportunity to counsel with addicted persons and their families, as well as those who are struggling with such diseases. It also seeks to provide accurate, up to date information that can be used in the vital preventive

⁹⁷ Clinebell, Understanding and Counseling Persons with Alcohol, Drugs, and Behavioral Addictions. (Counseling for Recovery and Prevention Using Psychology and Religion.) Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984, p. 12.

⁹⁸ Clinebell, pp. 12-13.

education in congregations, other religious organizations, and in a variety of secular settings.⁹⁹

Howard Clinebell's book is a classic in the field. "Drug and alcohol abuse is America's number one health problem, the number one crime problem, the number one homeless problem, the number one youth problem, including youth violence."¹⁰⁰ This book is comprehensive, insightful, inclusive, and invaluable in its effectiveness providing a pragmatic approach to help those who suffer from addictions.

In his book, *Addiction & Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions*, Dr. Gerald May offers insight on this subject. "He serves as a psychiatrist, teacher, and supervises the program for training spiritual directors at the Shalem Institute in Washington, D.C. This book is a wise treatment of a topic of major concern in these most addictive times. He details the various addictions from which we can suffer, not only to substances like alcohol and drugs, but work, sex, performance, responsibility, and intimacy. Real honest talk on relationships between addictions and spirituality explore who and what "addicts" really are and who they are. He also examines 'the process of attachment' a delightful new idea in the understanding of addictions."¹⁰¹

May writes:

"I have witnessed many healings of substance and nonsubstance addictions and of many other disorders. In none of these miraculous empowerments were people freed having to remain intentional about avoiding a return to their old addictive behaviors. The real miracle was that avoidance became possible; the person could actually do it. Deliverance does not remove a person's responsibility; it does empower the person to exercise responsibility simply, gently, and effectively."¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.5. Source: Joseph A. Califano Jr., Former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, now president of the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University.

¹⁰¹ May.

¹⁰² Ibid, 153-154.

The resource by Dr. May is refreshing in its discussion on grace, community, and addictions. “A particular eruption of grace strikes into a person’s life like a lightning bolt of loving energy; the power of God’s goodness shines in victory over a particular human enslavement or misfortune. The enemy is weakened; the person is empowered.”¹⁰³

It is a must read for ministering to those who suffer from all addictions. When it comes to dealing with biblical perspectives on tough issues, the book, *Counseling in African-American Communities*, by Lee N. June, Ph.D. & Sabrina D. Black, M.A., and consulting editor, Dr. Willie Richardson is an important source utilized in the project. In these pages, it provides the tool for applying the power of the gospel in practical ways to meet the deep needs of our communities with life-changing effects.

It is helpful as a guidebook to deal with areas of addiction. The book is distinctive on insights for African-Americans on the problems in the community, particularly a focus on addictions. The knowledge and expertise is practical and professional for many models of effective ministry to addicts is addressed here. The problem of addictions as it relates to spiritual development is a remarkable touch to include in the project. The book gives other referrals to resources after each chapter pertaining to African-American women, family systems, biblical studies, addictions, and drug abuse organizations and hotlines, for further study. It is a very welcomed source of referrals and guides on many topics in addictions. “The power of the Bible is a force in

¹⁰³ Ibid, 154.

solving problems in counseling.”¹⁰⁴ Strikingly, the book affirms the team approach to healing communities in the twenty-first century and with a no-nonsense dialogue.

The authors write, “Christian Research and Development has been training churches and individuals in biblical counseling for the last twenty years, and we have recently joined together in establishing the National Biblical Counselors Association. Our mission is to ‘advance the use of God’s Word in counseling and mobilizing lay counselors for the body of Christ, partnering with professional and pastoral counselors.’”¹⁰⁵

Anne Wilson Schaeaf and Diane Fassel the authors of *The Addictive Organization*, is used as a secondary resource of work for this thesis. The book reflects on forms of addiction in an organization. It deals with management, leadership, organizational teams, hierachal systems, individuals explains how an organization becomes addictive. The subject is a learning experience for any who read this book. It a well written and some who have commented on the book say it’s sure to be controversial. I highly recommend the book as we read deep insights into addiction and the addictive personality of individuals or an organization if change does not take place. Here is an example of powerful writings from their research:

“In the addictive organization, everyone loses. This is because the addictive disease is a ‘contagious’ disease that is insidious, progressive, and fatal. Individuals have their disease, and by reason of the relationship, we experience our disease when we get involved with another. It should be clear that even attempts not to get involved with people who are operating out of their disease is a way of participating in the disease, because when we deny or ignore what is going on, we become part of the disease.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ June & Black, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Schaeaf & Fassel, p. 93.

The thought provoking and stimulating discussions on addictions will keep you re-reading this book. The wide range of issues and materials pertaining to ministers, leaders, individuals organizations, are revolutionary in how they function and how they become addicted. We can easily apply great lessons and models found for urban ministry, for the church, and for an addictions ministry. “Organizations can be- and need to be—based on spiritual and humanitarian values. They can be visionary in the society while meeting needs, providing jobs, making a profit, and performing the ‘work’ of the society. They can also be visionary, facilitative of health, and provide a good living for employees.”¹⁰⁷

When discussing the addictions problem and the issues surrounding corrupt systems there is a universal thread in the wisdom found on the addictive system organizations in this book. It teaches a different way to think about systems, particularly, addictive organizations or institutions.

Henri Nouwen’s book, *The Wounded Healer*, is filled with examples of everyday experiences of leaders who influence the lives of others. As ministers and servants of others, he shows us the importance of personal interrelationships to achieve a more effective and relevant ministry in our fragmented culture. “This study is divided into four chapters that begin with the condition of a suffering world; the second, the condition of a suffering generation; the third; the condition of a suffering man; and the fourth, the condition of a suffering minister”. Nouwen takes the creative standpoint to describe ‘hospitality’ as a central attitude of the minister who wants to make his own wounded condition available to others as a source of healing. It is a place where we can move without fear and discover new directions in our proposed ministry. This requires the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 225.

minister to know where he stands and whom he stands for, but it also requires that he allow others to enter his life, come close to him and ask him how their lives connect with his. This is such a crucial part of the passion I have in serving those who suffer from addictions and the calling of God on my life.¹⁰⁸

Nouwen writes, “We do not know where we will be two, ten or twenty years from now. What we can know, however, that man suffers and that a sharing of suffering can make us move forward. The minister is called to make this forward thrust credible to his many guests, so that they do not stay but have a growing desire to move, in the conviction that the full liberation of man and his world is still to come.”¹⁰⁹

Without a doubt, these are challenging times in presenting a holistic gospel for others to receive healing and empowerment by way of the church and its community. The implication will involve what Nouwen describes as “making one’s own wounds a source of healing. The sharing of superficial personal pains is only putting a band aid on deep scars and wounds. These scars remain blemishes that never got proper healing. These scars may heal with the proper medication but some scars remain permanent. God is a healer. Communication is a key element for a constant willingness to see one’s own pain and suffering as rising from the depth of the human condition which all men share.”¹¹⁰

The wounded minister so wonderfully depicted in *The Wounded Healer* adds in the middle of our darkest hour and changing times announces with incredible boldness that we are waiting for a Liberator. We are waiting, they announce, for a Messiah who

¹⁰⁸ Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1979) 99, excerpts from back cover.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 100.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 88.

will free us from hatred and oppression, from racism and war—a Messiah who will let peace and justice take their rightful place. Jesus has given a new fullness by making his own broken body the way to health, to liberation, and to new life. Thus like Jesus, he who proclaims liberation is called not only to care for his own wounds and the wounds of others, but also to make his wounds into a major source of his healing power.¹¹¹

What are our wounds? Nouwen explains they have been spoken by many voices; words such as ‘alienation’, ‘separation’, ‘isolation’ and ‘loneliness’ have been used as the names of our wounded condition. These are the same words, which are the underlying causes why those who suffer from addictions need healing, empowerment, and safe places to recover from a broken, shattered life.¹¹²

In the book, *The Road to H: Narcotics, Delinquency, and Social Policy*, concerns itself on the problem of narcotics and addictions in a special way. This book allows us to look into the drug trade and trafficking, governmental policies, and social policies surrounding narcotics. It looks at the social issues in our society facing urban dwellers. In the world of drug addiction and other addictions there are various systems that are involved in how drugs of all kinds enter our cities. The book explores individuals, groups, organizations, and law enforcement agencies in their fight against drugs in America and around the world insight on political, judicial, social, and economic systems are helpful in our discussions on addictions. The author shares intervention and strategic plans of actions by government and community organizations, assisting in the knowledge of what has been effective in combating narcotics and outreach pertaining to the issue of addictions and substance abuse. The addictions in our communities affect other areas

¹¹¹ Nouwen, 81-83.

¹¹² Ibid.

such as crime, increased prison population, violence, ravished communities, and other ills in our communities that the author talks plainly about. It is informative, understandable, and great wealth of research for the thesis project.

A recognized authority in the field of addiction, Alcoholic Anonymous is a valid program and helps us understand why those with this problem of addictions and alcoholism need God, but not moralism. In his book, *Ministering To Alcoholics*, John E. Keller writes about information we can use in ministry and in counseling alcoholics. The fact that we can understand the problems of alcoholics also leads us to gain in understanding of all people with problems—"the problems common to everyone." Mr. Keller shows us ways to understand the emotional problems, individual's reactions to direct treatment, and interviews with alcoholics. A very insightful work as well he writes about alcoholism that needs reckoning with in our twenty-first century outreach to addicts.

"When surrender takes place, it is more than surrender to the reality of powerlessness over alcohol. Dr. Harry Tiebout states that 'at the start of the psyche: (1) assumes its own omnipotence, (2) cannot accept frustrations, (3) functions at a tempo allegretto with a good deal of staccato and vivace thrown in. Remembering what has already been said about our 'being by nature sinful' we see that what Dr. Tiebout says exists 'at the start of life' is quite identical to the theological doctrine of original sin. The Fall of man was that he wanted to be like God, wanted in this sense to be God. We here quote Dr. Tiebout at length because we feel that what he says will be very meaningful to

pastors, not only in understanding the alcoholic and the surrender phenomenon, but also because of the interesting parallels here to the Christian doctrine of man.”¹¹³

As the project examines the biblical principles and theological insights from the Bible it is vital in an addictions ministry and the role of the church to prepare for biblical training in a similar manner. Education and intervention on the topic of addictions and to the comparisons of bible study and treatment of addicts brings awareness to the project.

The material will enrich one’s ministry and bring effective ministry to those who suffer from addictions. If any pastor has the special privilege of ministering to those who suffer as addicts, the role of acceptance, treatment, understanding, compassion, and alcohol education have been give assigned chapters with a wealth of knowledge dealing with counseling, spouses, symptoms, the fourth and fifth steps of Alcohol Anonymous is discussed in relevant ways and offers practical understanding of these AA steps. A chapter titled, ‘Alcoholics Anonymous’ that guides us into the world of Bill W. and the A.A. program, purposes, goals, steps, and other valuable history of AA. As one of the successful programs for sobriety and recovery for alcoholics it is only fitting to provide information, cases, and biblical sources of help found in many communities across America.

In his quest for holistic evangelization, author Mortimer Arias, in his book, *Announcing The Reign Of God*, is the fuel I needed to voice the ministry foundation for this proposed addictions ministry. These words by Bishop Arias speak of the charge given to Christians in the coming of the Kingdom of God.

¹¹³ Keller, John E. *Ministering To Alcoholics*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966, p.44.

THE SIGNS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Evangelization and human development go together! Most of the people participating in the Base Christian communities were already nominal Christians, baptized Christians, but now they had become disciples! This is not numerical church growth (all of them were considered members of the church) but it is evangelization—making the gospel real and effective in their lives and their community. This is evangelization *within* the church. Even more, it is becoming the evangelization *of* the church, challenging the traditional church and its hierarchy to new understandings of the gospel! Consequently, the church can reach a new authenticity, a new credibility, to proclaim the good news of the kingdom to those outside. Only God knows the impact on the nonbelievers, agnostics, people of anti-Christian ideologies, (including drug addicts and those suffering from all kinds of addictions) of a church that is able to present a new face and new life. A church that is not living for itself but, like the Master, for others, for the kingdom.¹¹⁴

The Spirit has been challenging the church in ‘rethinking identity and vocation in its four walls to have a holistic evangelization and biblical perspective of “the kingdom” for the mission of the church. Two important yet powerful statements are needed here to build upon the foundation for the next chapter which are taken from other significant works that are relevant to doing truth and kingdom business in our ministry to addictive people, dysfunctional people, and addictions, and corrupt systems.

How do we discern the signs of the Kingdom? There, where a just order is sought; there, where human life is respected and a full life is fostered; there, where women and

¹¹⁴ Arias, Mortimer. *Announcing The Reign of God*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984, p. 108.

men live in solidarity; there, where the structures of society try to favor “the orphan, the widow and the poor”; there, where human beings have the opportunity to become what God intends them to be; THERE, the Kingdom of God is at work.

“On the contrary, there, where the social system is bound to favor a few in detriment of the majority of the members of society; there, where injustice divides and puts people against people; there, where dictatorial regimes curtail freedom and tread under foot the fundamental rights of people; THERE, the anti-kingdom is at work.”¹¹⁵

So likewise we ‘pitch our tents’ in the midst of those who suffer from addictions and substance abuse to intervene to bring about healing and empowerment for all men and women, children and adults, involving holistic intervention approaches with strategies to improve the lives of these men and women in the spiritual and human development in all areas of their lives. One day at a time, one step at a time, one soul at a time, for such a time as this!

Dr. Villafaña expresses the same relevancy to missions by quoting Prophet Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

“The gospel at its best deals with the whole man, not only his soul but also his body, not only his spiritual well-being but also his material well-being. A religion that professes a concern for the souls of men and is not equally concerned about the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them, is a spiritually moribund religion. – Martin Luther King, Jr.”¹¹⁶

We will have to examine the whole person and they’re environment, their culture, family systems, and other pertinent systems, etc. However, in terms of their underlying psychological and spiritual dynamics, all of them have much in common with one

¹¹⁵ Mortimer Arias. *Announcing The Reign of God: Evangelization and the Subversive Memory of Jesus*. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 109.

¹¹⁶ Villafaña, *The Liberating Spirit*, 216.

another and with substance addictions. Each addiction is a distorted expression of a profound spiritual hunger for an integrating commitment to an object of devotion that will give our lives purposeful unity. When people seek to satisfy and quench this spiritual need by either an activity or a chemical substance, they are hyper vulnerable to becoming painfully addicted to the behavior or substance.¹¹⁷

“But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds, declares the Lord... (Jeremiah 30:17 NIV).”¹¹⁸

THE SIGNS OF THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE CITY

In conclusion, Bishop and Author, Mortimer Arias writes some provocative thoughts in the following words to consider for effective strategies in an addictions ministry:

“One thing is absolutely clear: we need to claim and to recover the totality of the biblical gospel for our evangelization. Which means, first of all, that we need to recover the original message of Jesus on the reign of God and the kingdom perspective for our motivation and strategy. We have to integrate Jesus’ message in the Gospels with the totality of the New Testament witness in our theology for evangelization and in our evangelistic message. A purely Pauline theology—mediated through the Reformation and narrowed by some of our historical or sectarian reformulations—will not do it. A watered-down gospel of the “teachings” of the “historical Jesus” on “God’s Fatherhood and human brotherhood” will not do it either, much less a gospel encapsulated in the missiles of contemporary apocalypticism. By contrast, it is obvious that our traditional mini-theologies of evangelization (the “plan of salvation,” or “four spiritual laws” type of kerygmatic reduction) do not do justice to the whole gospel, and they cannot match the desperate needs of the people or the challenges of our troubled world.”¹¹⁹

In response to this, he states:

“We live in a world on the brink of nuclear annihilation with millions starving to death or living subhuman lives in the midst of abundant resources accessible only

¹¹⁷ Clinebell, 145.

¹¹⁸ Abraham, Ken. *Armed and Dangerous*. Uhrichville, OH: Barbour Book, 1973, p. 129.

¹¹⁹ Arias, 115-116.

to a few. The most advanced societies are caught in the idolatries of modern materialism and consumerism, or submerged in the underworld of drug addictions, crime, and esoteric cults. This is a world of untold suffering and oppression, frustrated revolutions, incredible violations of human rights, unbelievable refinements of torture, or rampant genocide. Millions of children are condemned to die of malnutrition before their first or fifth year of life, or to suffer brain damage for the rest of their lives, such as they are. This world has enormous resources and faces great and challenging tasks—forming new generations, raising human life to the status of God’s revealed purpose, building new societies, and incarnating God’s love in fraternal and caring communities. In such a world, it will not be enough to go around the globe “saving souls” with a census chart to get individuals to make “instant decisions” for Christ. Only a God-inspired and God-sustained hope will free us from despair and cynicism in the face of so much sin and ugliness.”¹²⁰

The literature resources in this project enable the addictions ministry to prepare for the challenges ahead for long term positive results. It is these foundational and subsidiary literature resources that give rise to a new grace, and a new model of ministerial education for practical outreach in interrelationships of systems and the church involving systemic methods of learning. Several of these literatures have informed and influenced the content of the project to effectively work in complex social systems.

¹²⁰ Arias, p. 116.

**CHAPTER THREE: TOWARD A LIBERATING SPIRITUAL,
BIBLICAL, AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR
EMPOWERMENT AND HEALING OF THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM ADDICTIONS**

REMOVE THE VEIL AND PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF GOD

I have discovered through personal experience with addictions and ministering to those people who suffer from addictions of all kinds; that addictions have no face. In other words, there is no particular face or background where we can label who becomes an addict or who is suffering from an addictions. There are numerous underlying causes why people choose to run from reality and abuse drugs. There are many reasons why people are unable to deal with the reality of life often feeling alienated from the world in which we live. Some people choose to use substances, drugs, work, sex, and alcohol and many other addictions to escape from pain, alienation, rejections, abandonment, boredom, and loneliness. People need help with accepting the truth about addictions. We propose to minister understanding and education to enhance effective intervention and a healing ministry in the church and in the community of Brockton.

People are often afraid to talk about the issue of drug addiction or other addictions. As a Christian, for spiritual maturity and progress to occur it is an inside-outside process. We must understand the addictive person and bring insight to the church for effective ministry. We present here the ‘removing of the veil’ that is relevant to those who suffer from addictions to peel off the masks, to tear down the walls, and clean our hearts that have been covered with gross darkness. So many addicts can attest to running their lives by self-will, which results in hiding from the presence of God. Are they really hidden from God or foolish about whom God is?

We find in Tozier's words the most vivid account of this 'veil' that is not a beautiful thing. Most people will care not to talk about the facts of 'rending the veil'. We must remember that when we talk of removing or rending the veil we are speaking as the author writes:

"We are speaking in a figure, and the thought of it is poetical, almost pleasant; but in actuality there is nothing pleasant about it. In human experience that 'veil' is made of living spiritual tissue; it is composed of the sentient, quivering stuff of which our whole being consists, and to touch it is to touch us where we feel pain, to tear it away is to injure us, to hurt us and make us bleed. To rip through the dear and tender stuff of which life is made can never be anything but deeply painful. Self is the opaque veil that hides the face of God from us. It can be removed only in spiritual experience, never by mere instruction."¹²¹

"The sanctuary was reserved for the service of the priests, but the most holy place (the Semitic expression is "holy of holies")—could be entered by the high priest alone, and even he could enter only one day a year. But Jesus the forerunner had dedicated the heavenly sanctuary so that his followers could join him in the full presence of God"
(Hebrews 9:23-28).¹²² The veil had separated even the priests from the full holiness of God symbolized by the most holy place, but now believers in Jesus had complete and perfect access to God's presence (Hebrews 4:16). God dwelling among his people in the tabernacle had pointed to those who sought him even the (Exodus 33:11), despite some limitations (Exodus 33:23; 34:30-35)."¹²³

The death of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary is salvation and a redemptive act even for those who stand seemingly separated from the love of God can enter in the holy place. "Therefore, brethren, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood

¹²¹ A.W. Tozier, "Glorify His Name," Chapter 3. <http://glorifyhisname.com/sys-tmpl/pg3>.
5/19/05.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary New Testament*. (Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Press), 1993, 670.

of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;" (Hebrews 10: 19-20).¹²⁴

"Removing the Veil" by those who suffer from addictions and believers in Jesus Christ is predicated on Christ the Savior's work upon the Cross-. It is predicated on a person believing and receiving what the Gospel proclaims concerning Jesus Christ. Christ became the 'veil', and as such His body had to be broken on the cross so the veil in the temple could be torn away. The veil separating them had to be removed if God and humanity are to meet in Holy Communion. As Jesus was set-aside in His actual death during crucifixion, the temple veil was physically torn so that ransomed men need no longer pause in fear to enter the Holy of Holies. God wills that all humanity would push into His presence and live our whole life there.¹²⁵

A.W. Tozier in his book entitled, 'Glorify His Name', writes:

"The interior journey of the soul from the wilds of sin into the enjoyed Presence of God is beautifully illustrated in the Old Testament tabernacle. The returning sinner (addicts included) first entered the outer court where he offered a blood sacrifice on the brazen altar and washed himself in the laver that stood near it. Then through a veil he passed into the holy place where no natural light could come, but the golden candlestick, which spoke of Jesus the Light of the World, threw its soft glow over all. There also was the shewbread to tell of Jesus, the Bread of Life, and the altar, of incense, a figure of unceasing prayer. Though the worshipper has enjoyed so much, still he had not yet entered the Presence of God. Another veil separated from the Holy of Holies where above the mercy tabernacle stood, only the high priest could enter there, and that but once a year, with blood which he offered for his sins and the sins of the people. It was this last veil which was rent when our Lord gave up the ghost on Calvary, and the sacred writer explains that this rending of the veil opened the way for every worshipper in the world to come by the new and living way straight into the divine Presence."¹²⁶

One of the greatest revelations and facts of the tabernacle was that Jehovah was there; a Presence was waiting within the veil. Who is this within the veil that dwells in

¹²⁴ Robert Bayley, "Addiction and Grace," *Total Health Communications*, October 1989.

¹²⁵ A.W. Tozier.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 175.

fiery manifestations? It is none other than God Himself, ‘One God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible,’ and ‘One Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeded from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified.¹²⁷

“The position of the veil has special significance. The veil was hung between the Holy and Most Holy Place, right in front of the ark and mercy seat. Thus it is called ‘the veil of the testimony’. Access to the mercy seat could only be gained as the veil was removed. The High Priest alone could remove it (Hebrew 9:6-7) and he was not allowed to move it any time, but only once a year (Leviticus 16:2; Hebrews 9:6-7). The High Priest could only remove it as he entered bearing the blood of sacrifice (Leviticus 16:3; Hebrews 9:7). When the High Priest was behind the veil, he stood within the Holiest of All, face to face with Jehovah, having nothing between them. In reality, there is no veil between the Lord and ourselves.”¹²⁸

The author, Tony Alamo writes in an article called ‘Removing the Ugly Veil’:

“We are in the New Testament new covenant now. The New Testament promises from God is that whenever a person, Jew or Gentiles, turns [his mind and his heart in repentance] to the Lord [the written Word of God], the veil [that blocks his ability to understand God, to know God, and to have His power] is stripped off and taken away (2 Corinthians 3:16). Then they may see the light, the knowledge of God, and have, by God’s Spirit entering their spirit, the very life and power of God to control their thoughts, their emotions, and their lives. This will enable them to retain their allegiance to Christ. After Christ’s death and resurrection, He became a life-giving Spirit. He is now able to dwell within human beings by sending Himself into them at the time of their asking. At this time they are given God’s power to keep the spirit of all the lusts of the world out of their lives.”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Robertson W. Nicoll. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1940), p. 459.

¹²⁸ http://alamoministries.com/content/english/Gospel_literature/removing_veil.html, “Removing the Ugly Veil.” 5/19/05.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

It is thus that humanity is able to walk in the new life in Jesus Christ regardless of a person's background, addictions, condition, diseases, gender, religious beliefs and traditions, or past, present, or future sins. If we accept this new way of life and keep God's Word, His thoughts embedded in our minds, we have put on 'the whole Armour of God' and are 'able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11). Mr. Alamo suggests that is the only way to remove this gruesome, ugly veil from our mind and our hearts immediately so they may be able to take authority over the schemes of the devil. It is a constant renewing of our minds with the Word, the Spirit, and the power of God, so addicts can have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). The godly mind produces righteousness and sanity.¹³⁰ Those who suffer from addictions live in an underworld of evil, psychological and mental insanity, emotional bankruptcy, physical deterioration, and separation from God.

What we have is an open heaven, liberty, glorious liberty, and immediate access right into God's presence. The Bible records where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (Luke 4:18-19). For all of humanity who enter in beyond the veil have access to the Lord God. But, we create many veils of our own that unnecessarily shut Him out from our gaze. Professor and Theologian Dr. Doug Hall report "any infection in any living system leads to death."¹³¹ The system no longer functions properly and is often dysfunctional. We are all fallen creatures which sin infects these systems too. Therefore, we must use redemptive models, systematic thinking, and redemptive thinking to strategize and redeem the sinful nature of man through an analysis of this fallen nature.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Dr. Douglas Hall, DMIN Lecture notes, 3rd Residency, CUME-Boston, 2006.

All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Yet, we are part of a complex interrelatedness of living systems impacting the very lives of all humanity.

“Our struggle for freedom from addictions in an authentic and social spirituality must be cognizant that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers [*archai*], against the authorities [*exousiai*], against the powers of this dark world [*kosmokratores*] (Ephesians 6:12). These are “powers” that rebelled against God, and their original power and authority over creation included its social and political life. This authority given by God for providential care has resulted in oppression. They are ‘fallen’ powers with idolatrous-demonic claims.”¹³²

“What is most significant to note at this time is that the ‘powers’ have been defeated and carried captive by Christ. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Colossians 2:15).”¹³³ It is the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we know is a powerful strategy in the ministry of addictions. What is impossible with man, all things are possible in God.

An addict suffers deep scars and wounds including those who suffer from addictions wrestles with dysfunctional families, emotions, thoughts, ideas, perceptions, past or present hurts, severe trauma and guilt. There are many other life threatening issues including suicide, bi-polar conditions, insane conduct, and ungodly behavior. Unregenerate minds and sinful actions are common issues in people who suffer from addictions that one must confront and come to grips with in the reality of their addictions. There are various strongholds, and territory stolen by the demonic battleground for the soul, mind, and heart of an addict that needs to be realized and understood for effective

¹³² Villafaña, *The Liberating Spirit*, 180.

¹³³ Ibid.

ministry to take place. “Any and every spirituality to be authentic and relevant must come to terms with personal and social sin and evil.”¹³⁴

Through our learning teams and experiences we agree that there must be a work of God in destruction, before we are free. We must invite the cross to do its work within us. We must ask God and the Holy Spirit to show us how to die to self, and then we must surrender and submit our fleshly desires to God’s will. In the language of 12 step programs, this stage is critical. It’s not just confession of the problem, its surrender to a Higher Power and for the Christian it is God, as we understand him. This is true for the people who suffer from addictions and other areas where healing needs to occur. God’s purpose is that our life be made completely whole in Jesus Christ. And we must engage in spiritual warfare. The cross of Calvary did exactly that to Jesus and it is what the Cross will do to every person. Those who suffer from addictions need help to be set free from the bondage of self, flesh, the world, and the devil. This is true for all humanity as well. God must do everything for us. God is our all in all. Our part is to yield and trust, confess, forsake, repudiate the self-life, and then reckon it crucified. But we must also be careful to distinguish lazy ‘acceptance’ from the real work of God.¹³⁵

For those who suffer from addictions the sense of a purposeless and hopeless life is similar to the biblical account of the women at the well. The quest for purpose and meaning in life, and to discover one’s true identity can be gleaned from this passage of scripture. “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). This woman had spent her whole life in bondages perhaps addictions. When she cries out to Jesus to give her this water that quenches and satisfies her mind, body, and

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ http://www.wholeperson-counseling.org/doctrine/torn_veil.htm/significanceoftheveil. 5/05.

spirit we discover some of the areas of her broken life. We learn her choices in life where questionable and suspicious only because we are told she had several husbands. Regardless of her past sins and ungodly relationships, her poor choices in life resulted in oppression, brokenness, and to be an outcasts in her community. It was an unfulfilled life. Any person who suffers from addictions has these same bedfellows of oppression, and feelings of being empty and ostracized in their community. In addition, we are constantly trying to fill the empty voids in our lives with drugs, sex, work, family, and false gods. For example, a desperate and hopeless person will look for love, attachment, and acceptance in other unhealthy ways. But Jesus, never allowed the woman's past mistakes or condition to keep her from receiving the Word of God. The Savior, Jesus received her, embraced her, showed compassion, accepted her as she was and healed her from her broken past, empowering her with power for the future. In other words, he made her whole.

The biblical principles Jesus models for us are true compassion and empowerment so the woman can be restored from her broken life. The theological principles of unconditional love, the manifestation of the Word of God (doing truth), and the power of God's Holy Spirit are key factors for ministry. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" Not all of the disciples were able to answer the question, but only Peter responded correctly. Jesus confirmed Peter reminding him that flesh and blood had not revealed this truth but by the Holy Spirit. The woman at the well had not the eyesight to see Jesus. We can imagine she was spiritually bankrupt and in despair, desperate for healing, relief, and needed rescuing from a dark past. When can say she had 'veils' that needed removing so she can see Jesus. Drawing near in the presence of God, she

received freedom and liberty, God revealed himself to her. She became intimate with God. We witness from this biblical story the healing, empowerment, self-worth, and value she received to fulfill her God given purpose and embark on a new life. There is biblical and theological insight we can apply from this text pertaining to an addictions ministry. For those who suffer from addictions have similar issues as the woman at the well. Addicts are in need of love, worth, comfort, and acceptance most of all a new path and a new life. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but the world should be saved through Him” (John 3:16-17). People who suffer from addictions need powerful prayer, an encounter with God, and the love of Jesus. They also need a support system.

Today, our society and the church, continues to view women in a negative fashion. There are differences on how society views women who are addicts and drunks via men who suffers from the same condition. Whether it is a man or a woman God desires to set all free from their conditions. The lifestyle of the woman was sinful; and she seemed to look for love, acceptance, redemption, and wholeness in a man and other addictions (her husbands). Unable to find true satisfaction and fulfillment, she met Jesus at the well. Jesus changed her life and gave her a new life. Jesus told her the truth about herself and in His presence there was liberty for her. She goes forth in her community and into the world to spread the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is one of God’s greatest strategic plans to spread the Gospel of Christ to all nations. It is a witness to the transforming power of the Word of God.

Let us examine this text, “there is a veil between my soul and my body” (John 7:38). The ‘removing of the veil’ means life. This is important to understanding the ministry of reconciliation and the processes necessary to help those who suffer from addictions to remove the veil(s) that hinder their encounter with God. It is more than just putting down or stop using the substance or object of their addictions. It is more than just relief from a compulsive behavior. This is only the beginning for those who suffer from addictions. Recovery and intervention is based on staying stopped, spiritual and medical intervention, counseling, rehabilitation programs providing the person who is suffering a safe haven from their debilitating disease and their addiction to recover, abort, and escape from this life and death experience.¹³⁶

Sometimes there are hindrances and obstacles that prove to be the vital instruments in discerning the Spirit of God at work. Through conflict, confrontation, tough love, the truth in love, unconditional love manifested through Christians, can effectively help an addictive person who is spiritually bankrupt and in need of dire help. Jesus was an incarnate being, the Word of God made flesh like humans. His death on the Cross was a substitute for sinful human flesh, that those who believe on Him may have life and freedom from any addictions, conditions, and bondages. At his death, when his body was broken by crucifixion, the actual veil in the temple Jerusalem was torn. Now there is no need to be hidden from the knowledge and presence of God by the “veil of human sinfulness”.¹³⁷

Being conformed to the image of Christ means our shattered image is being restored to the original intent of the creation. By the disobedience of the first Adam who

¹³⁶ Tozier.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

was created in God's image, the image is shattered and the entire human race was under God's judgment. However, by the obedience of the second Adam, who through His complete work brought us to God in reconciliation, our image is being restored to His likeness. This is the transformation that happened for the woman at the well. "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Our becoming Christ-like is possible because Christ first became like us and fulfilled the will of the Father God in obedience even to the death on the Cross. "Therefore God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name," (Philippians 2:9).

"Love creates images of itself potent for discerning social responsibility. Three elements in Christian love contained seeds of the recognition of human rights: equality, respect, and perception of common needs. Since Christian love for all people is based on characteristics which are shared by all—God 's love in Christ, God's providence, the image of God, a common creator—this love does not take into consideration those particulars which make one individual seem greater or lesser than another. The result is a basic equality in which the well-being of one neighbor is as valuable as that of any other."¹³⁸

"Thus Christian maturity to the fullness of the image of the Son is God's grace poured out to us in His perfect will, love, and mercy. Paul expresses his anguish as if he were in the childbirth for the believers in Galatians, that Christ might be formed in them."¹³⁹ "My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you—but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you" (Galatians 4:19-20). Bonhoeffer explains, "to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ is not an ideal of realizing some kind of similarity with Christ, which seeks to shape with us. It is Christ's own form, which seeks to manifest itself in us our goal, is to be shaped into the entire form of the incarnate, the crucified, and the transfigured one."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Stephen C Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 49.

¹³⁹ Tozier.

¹⁴⁰ Dietrick Bonhoeffer. *The Cost of Discipleship*. (New York: MacMillan, 1955), 135.

Jesus models the perfect will of God towards those people who are often addicted to all kinds of substances and behaviors. Many addicts are victims of abuse, brokenness, and shunned as the world's rejects. There are many who are hopeless and in despair. Jesus seeks those sinners to bring them to Him. From our biblical and theological basis, using the biblical model of Jesus' work on the Cross that sets men free from their infirmities, diseases, and sins is effective and perfect for this ministry, for Jesus Christ is perfect. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life". We cannot lead an effective ministry without the foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ being made known to everyone regardless of his or her addictions. The biblical principle of love, grace, mercy, and hospitality are important for all leaders, ministers, Pastors, and the Church. Why should a person who suffers from an addiction be treated any different from any other sinner?¹⁴¹

The author, David DePia, in a wonderful article entitled, "Thru The Veil" explains both the tabernacle in the wilderness and the holy place of the temple in Jerusalem that were made according to the pattern, which God had given to Moses. At the center of this spiritual type of the temple is the 'veil'. The veil stood between the Most Holy Place and the holy place. But when Jesus died, it was torn in half, from top to bottom. The Bible reveals that this torn veil symbolized something else—something real – WHICH HAD HAPPENED because of the death of Jesus. It is these spiritual types as the tabernacle, and the veil, that God uses throughout the Bible. He oftentimes calls these symbols "shadows".¹⁴² "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice,

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² <http://www.goodnewsarticles.com/May01-1.htm>. p. 5 of 11.

yielded up the ghost. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake and the rocks split”¹⁴³ (Matthew 27:50-51).

“But only the high priest entered the inner rooms, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance...When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here...he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.”¹⁴⁴

According to the Hebrew Epistle (Hebrews 9:7-12) reads as follows:

“But into the second only the high priests enters, once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshipper perfect in conscience, since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation, But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:7-12)

The interrelatedness of the Godhead is in perfect unity and harmony in bringing forth redemption to humanity. Creation is interrelated to God, and to others. God’s plan of redemption was because of sin, which affected everything that God made, which he said in the beginning, was very good. But this interrelated of systems has an infection from the fallen ness of man. “The Day of Atonement becomes instrumental here because “the blood”, both of the bullock and of the goat which the high priest carried ‘once a year’ within ‘the sacred veil,’ was offered for himself (including the priesthood) and for the errors (or rather ignorance’s) of the people. The High Priest had confessed and on

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Alfred Edersheim. *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1994), 256-257.

which he laid ‘all the iniquities of the children of Israel,’ and all their transgressions in all their sins, ‘meant something quite different.’¹⁴⁵

“The law made nothing perfect, but was the bringing in of a better hope; that in the covenant mercy of God guilt and sin were indeed removed from the people, that they were ‘covered up,’ and in that sense atoned for, or rather that they were both ‘covered up’ and removed, but that they were not really taken away and destroyed till Christ came; that they were only taken into a land not inhabited, till He should blot it out by His own blood; that the provision which the Old Testament made was not only preparatory and temporary, until the ‘time of the reformation,’ and that hence real and true forgiveness of sins, and with it the spirit of adoption, could only be finally obtained after the death and resurrection of the ‘Lamb of God’ which taketh away the sin of the world.’ God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect, for the law having a shadow of the good things to come, could not ‘make the comers thereunto perfect;’ nor yet was it possible ‘that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.’ The live goat ‘let go’ was every year a remover of sins which yet were never really removed in the sense of being blotted out—only deposited, as it were, and reserved till He came whom God hath set for as a propitiation...because of the passing over of the former sins, in the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25).¹⁴⁶

“DePia states the Most Holy Place was physical and was merely a SHADOW of something REAL. And what God says about the physical is a revelation of what Jesus Christ has done through His Redemption. If you were standing outside of the Most Holy Place, you would nevertheless still be in the holy place in the tabernacle. You would find yourself where the shewbread, candlestick, and other objects were situated. But right in front of you would be this immense curtain. It separates the holy place from the Most Holy Place. You aren’t allowed to go behind this curtain into the MOST holy place unless you are the High Priest. And even then, you can only go once a year.”¹⁴⁷

This setup shows clearly the separation between God and man—“an impenetrable barrier. The MOST holy place is the immediate presence of God. It is oneness with God. But you cannot see it—let alone enter into it. There is this curtain keeping you out. Don’t picture or imagine this curtain, or, as it is called, ‘veil’, as some kind of transparent

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Edersheim, 267. (Adopted the rendering of Dean Alford, div. From Authorized Version).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 34. The Rabbis speak of two veils; the high priest went in by the southern edge of the first veil, then walked along until he reached the northern corner of the second veil, by which he entered the Most Holy Place, (footnote on pg. 34).

fabric—like the ones we often have hanging on our living room and kitchen windows.

No. This veil was, in some cases, six inches to a foot thick. There are records that say it was so heavy that it took an ox to lift it in place. It was a very formidable barrier.”¹⁴⁸

When we seek effective and holistic ministries to the downtrodden, lost SHEEP, the sick and diseased in an addictions ministry we speak clearly of the complex barriers of ‘removing the veil’ whether it is sin, addictive personality, behaviors, guilt, shame, idolatry, pride) those hindrances that separate us from the presence of God and an abundant life in Jesus Christ. The theological principle is those who suffer from addictions are separated from God, suffering in gross darkness and near death experiences, feeling there is no hope oftentimes.

The author and theologian, Dr. Eldin Villafaña explains, “in scripture *Kosmos* has two principal meanings, one positive and the other negative. Its positive meaning refers to all people (John 3:16), and the physical and natural world (Psalms 24:1; Matthew 24:21). Negatively it refers, in the words of C. H. Dodd, to ‘human society in so far as it is organized on wrong principles’.”¹⁴⁹

“Thus, the theological understanding of *Kosmos*, as used in the New Testament, *Kosmos* represents the twisted values which threatened genuine human life. It means the evil social order – in whatever form or agency it manifests itself. It refers not to creation, or for that matter to human culture efforts per se, but to all elements in the social order, which are in opposition to God and God’s redemptive/liberating purposes. In a

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 3 of 11.

¹⁴⁹ Villafaña, The Liberating Spirit, 176.

theological sense what *sark* (“the flesh”) is to individual, personal existence, the *Kosmos* (“the world”) is to social existence.”¹⁵⁰

Dr. Eldin Villafañe writes, “As Mott reminds us the most characteristic social aspect of *Kosmos* in the New Testament is a system of values which are in opposition to God.”¹⁵¹ In the gospel of John we find these words to us today, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and his pride in possessions – comes not from the Father but from the world.” (1 John 2:15-16).¹⁵²

Addicts need God’s amazing grace and salvation, treatment, and divine intervention. Humanity needs a greater understanding of the bible and theology. When we seek to minister to those who suffer from addictions, we realize there are many factors involved in this process. Some interventions deem ineffective. There are many struggles in obtaining sobriety and recovery from any addictions and with our best efforts of interventions some people will continue in active addictions. This is where we must educate leaders, pastors, laypersons, families, individuals, and the church community that in this world there are successes and failures and structures that fail to serve man, as they should. There are factors that do not enable people to live a genuinely free, human, loving life. They have absolutized themselves and they demand from the individual and society an unconditional loyalty. They harm and enslave man. We cannot live with them and we cannot live without them. In the very act of seeking God’s guidance, in our attempts to turn to God, God does respond. We have Scripture and faith tradition and

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 177.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid, 178.

community to help us in the process. We are called to faithfulness, not success. Through passion and our calling of God we can do only what we can do.¹⁵³

“The world-order and the evil presence of the powers are never synonymous with the concrete forms of social and institutional life. Institutions function both to enslave and to liberate human existence. The powers are always present along with enslavement and death in small or large degree; but their real existence is behind the scenes in a system of hostile values vying for control of the life of the world.”¹⁵⁴

It has been recorded the ‘veil’ is so heavy and so strong that it takes the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Active Word of God to eradicate the evil that ensnares an addict to continue to use in spite of its destructive evil force. Again we reflect on the biblical principle of ‘removing the veil.’ The author DePia vividly gives us a description of the ‘veil’ as he continues:

“What does this veil represent? What is it a shadow of? The Most Holy Place represents the presence and throne of God. It represents fellowship and oneness with Him. So what does the veil that separates us FROM all of that represent? The veil represents the sin nature. For it is THAT which separates us from God, makes it impossible for us to enter into His presence. The sin nature is like a tremendous barrier between God and man, which keeps us in separate realms from each other. How did this veil get put up? God did not put up the veil. Actually, Adam put it up when he committed THE SIN.”¹⁵⁵

And we have all become partakers (not only drug addicts or those who suffer from addictions) and advocated what Adam did ever since. This is strong language but WE put it up. God is not responsible and have never done anything to separate Himself from us. It is our sin and our addictions, which separates us from God. If we are to examine our own relationship with God we will discover that when our sins and failures are exposed, what is generally our first reaction? Many of us immediately feel condemned. Sometimes we feel God is mad at us and has withdrawn. This is true in the

¹⁵³ Gerald May, *Addiction & Grace*. (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), 176.

¹⁵⁴ Villafaña, *The Liberating Spirit*, 181.

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.goodnewsarticle.com/May01-1.htm>, p. 5 of 11.

lives of many who suffer from addictions. We think God has put up the veil between Him and us again. We feel like utter failures in all areas of our lives. For others, we react to run and hide from God, from ourselves, and from others. “After Adam sinned, He hid from God. So the veil—which separates man from God—is SIN. It is the nature of sin into which all of us are born. It is a ‘veil’ that Adam put up. And it is a ‘veil’, which God RENT ASUNDER IN JESUS CHRIST”.¹⁵⁶

From a biblical and theological principle we cannot chart our own course in an effective addictions ministry. In dealing with the complex issue of addictions a transformative and systemic process must take place in the interrelated life of those who suffer from addictions. “This transformative process—the freeing of love from attachment—is akin to the ancient biblical concept of salvation. Hebrew words connoting salvation often contain a root made of the letters *y* and *s*, *yodh* and *shin*. One example is the “Hebrew name of Jesus, *Yeshua*, and ‘God saves’. This *y-s* root implies being set free from bondage or confinement, enabled to move freely, empowered to be and do according to one’s true nature”. The essence of all human desire is love and it is love that fulfills all of God’s laws.¹⁵⁷

“We are part of a larger system whether we want to be or not, and if our journey is consecrated we must recognize our responsibility for participating in the lovingness of those systems.”¹⁵⁸ “All around us are examples of “systemic breakdowns” ---problems such as global warming, the international drug trade”...the war in Iraq, the HIV/AIDS Crisis, World hunger and poverty, and the crime wave of drugs and gangs, the epidemic of addictions and substance abuse, the U.S. trade and budget deficits – problems that

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 5 of 11.

¹⁵⁷ May, *Addictions & Grace*.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

have no simple local cause. Despite the wealthiest country in the world, America, organizations break down, despite individual brilliance and innovative technological advances. Many people have been unable in the area of addictions and treatment centers, to pull their diverse talents and functions into a productive whole.¹⁵⁹

“Complexity can easily undermine confidence and responsibility—as in the frequent refrain, ‘It’s all too complex for me,’ or ‘There’s nothing I can do’. It’s the system. Systems thinking is the antidote to this sense of helplessness that many feel as we enter the “age of interdependence.” Systems’ thinking is a discipline for seeing the ‘structures’ that underlie complex situations, and for discerning high from low leverage change. That is, by seeing wholes we learn how to foster health. To do so, systems thinking offers a language that begins by restructuring how we think.”¹⁶⁰

Through healthy antidotes to empowerment and interventions in an addictions ministry we will examine and learn to see the world as a whole in relationship to the thesis project and ourselves. The nature of systems, and all our addictive behaviors affect other people. Some behaviors really damage and hurt others. We find we have a responsibility to try to identify and restrain those behaviors. Action must be taken as we seek the Word of God, seek God’s grace, shalom for our communities and freedom for addictive people; we will then seek nothing less than the fulfillment of the great commandments.¹⁶¹

The process of recovery is only a means to an end. Recovery for an addict is a lifetime journey. Major destructive addictions demand assistance from professionals and from others in our local communities. More interior idolatries require some spiritual companionship and accountability. There are times we just need a friend to help keep us honest. The journey towards seeking help might be very dramatic, as in turning oneself

¹⁵⁹ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 69.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ May, *Addictions & Grace*, 174-175.

in to the police to put an end to repeated illegal activities. It might be joining AA or other 12 step programs. It might be talking one's situation over with a pastor, counselor, or spiritual director. It might be asking one's spouse or family to help monitor a particular behavior. It might be treatment mandated at a local community empowerment center for addictions and substance abuse, which we propose in the church community a safe haven for addicts.

Whatever the form, involvement of other people is an essential component of a consecrated life. There is no authentic way around it. God is as much in our companion pilgrims as in our own souls. So we are called not only to love God above all else, but also to love our companions as our very selves. Though it may seem difficult, part of this love must involve letting them see us as we are and allow God to love us through them.¹⁶²

“This is not a random gathering of loving power. God’s grace through community involves something far greater than other people’s support and perspective. “Power exists in all groups of people, but that power may or may not be gracious. Mobs have power. Armies have power. Political groups have power. Churches have power. Families have power. Like individuals, these and all other groups have addictions.”¹⁶³

In a safe-haven faith-community center, it is love and grace that is poured forth among people not love that comes from people and through people. To be in such a community of faith is to be bathed in healing power.¹⁶⁴

Dr. Gerald May, author of “*Addictions & Grace*”, explains how he learned that all people are addicts, and that addictions to alcohol and other drugs are simply more obvious and tragic addictions than others have. In my personal experience, there were

¹⁶² Clinebell, 444-447.

¹⁶³ May, 173.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

some drug interventions for my many addictions; there was homelessness, rehabilitation treatment, small groups, deliverance services, and recovery programs. The cries for help of over 25 years were most pitiful and gut wrenching, yet during these years there were small successes. I grew up in the church all of my life. Today as a Minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, a loyal active member of my church for over 25 years, I never forget where the Lord brought me from; a mighty long way.

The insight and understanding to this soul-sickness and wretched state of addictions helps me to witness the signs, behaviors, and personalities that are perhaps addictive in other people. The church community manifests many of the characteristics of addiction, such as denial, dishonesty, manipulation, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, hopelessness, and the mind tricks are as numerous as the power games. The complex issue of addictions and/or substance abuse is a very real phenomenon in the church.¹⁶⁵

“For Christians, grace is the dynamic outpouring of God’s loving nature that flows into and through creation in an endless self-offering of healing, love, illumination, and reconciliation. It is a gift that we are free to ignore, reject, ask for, or simply accept. Grace itself cannot be possessed; it is eternally free, and like the Spirit that gives it, it blows where it will. We can seek it and try to be open to it, but we cannot control it. Grace seeks us but will not control us. Saint Augustine once said that God is always trying to give good things to us, but our hands are too full to receive them. If our hands are full, they are full of the things to which we are addicted. And not only our hands, but also our hearts, minds, and attention are clogged with addiction. Our addictions fill up the spaces within us, spaces where grace might flow. It is our clinging to these objects, grasping for them, becoming obsessed with them.”¹⁶⁶

It seems an addict is in a predicament. Taking off the mis-education of the addict and of grace is important here. God creates and cares for us in such a way that our addictions can never completely take away our freedom. Addiction may oppress our

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 11.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 17-18.

desire, erode our wills, confound our motivations, and contaminate our judgment, cloud our decisions, but its bondage is never absolute. No matter how bad the addiction, no matter how oppressed we are, by other people and circumstances or by our own internal addictions, some small capacity for choice remains unvanquished. There is always hope.¹⁶⁷

Clinebell writes:

“Addiction education is most effective when it is integrated into the church’s ongoing program of education concerning Christian approaches to social and health problems. Good educational strategies to approach presentations concerning alcoholism and other addictions through the sickness concept and hope-inspiring stories of Twelve Step recoveries is needed in our communities and in the church. To diminish resistance among church people and others to discussing alcohol problems and addictions education and information is critical. Many times their understanding often is incomplete or erroneous.”¹⁶⁸ This is where the rubber meets the road.

This thesis project will give hope, encouragement, and the education strategy that can dispel many misconceptions and bring awareness to this pandemic issue in our society and in our churches. Particularly, today the news is bombarded with the sudden crisis of meth labs and methamphetamine addicts, heroin addiction, child abduction, where 3,000 children have been orphaned in America due to its potent affects on those who suffer from its grip of addictions

“In thinking about ethical perspectives in alcohol and drug use, it is essential to go beyond biblical passages referring explicitly to alcohol. Ethical reflection should be framed in the broader context of the biblically based understanding of the good life, healing, and God’s power to liberate us from all of the countless forms of captivity. On this theme, Jesus read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah in his hometown synagogue this powerful passage: ‘The spirit of the Lord is upon me...to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.’ (Luke 4:18). The psalmist also affirms God’s liberating power in this familiar passage: “I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 18.

¹⁶⁸ Clinebell, 444.

and heard my cry. He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God” (Psalm 40:1-3).¹⁶⁹

In the area of addictions, we want to avoid oversimplifying the enigmatic complexities of addictions and to avoid an overly optimistic picture that ignores the harsh and dark realities and unsolved problems that still exist in abundance; so we are pilgrims learning to think systemically about addictions.¹⁷⁰ As sojourners, we cannot recover from addictions alone and overnight.

“Whatever is taught about alcohol, drugs, and addictions should be presented in the context of a positive view of the Christian life as a challenging adventure and a good gift from God, whatever its problems. Emphasis on what churches are for is many times more effective than stopping with what they are against. With an enlightening understanding of addictions and of Christian lifestyles, a clear picture can be formed.”¹⁷¹

One of the significant approaches we learn from Dr. Clinebell is being extremely careful in the sickness understanding of addictions because it could distort the existence of ethical issues. He feels that “addicts are simply people with obsessive-compulsive conditions called addictions.” Their behavior, like yours and mine, reflects a complex mixture of compulsiveness and freedom, accountability and drivenness, sin and sickness. To moralize is utterly futile yet we must engage the ethical aspects. The intervention strategy is to help them become more responsible and to encourage them to move beyond their areas of unfreedom.¹⁷²

“A key issue in relating to addicts and developing an effective ministry is how one understands the ethical aspects. Freedom from addictions is real and can

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 445.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid, 447.

happen if treatment, education, and intervention are available to all. Just like there are double standards for treating women alcoholics and HIV/AIDS addicted mothers in Africa, there is a double standard to the treatment of health care and social ills in our society.”¹⁷³

The ultimate test of a congregation’s loving and redemptive concern is its ability to accept the socially unacceptable, the oppressed, including addicted people. The persuasive attitudinal climate of a congregation with respect to addictions and addicts provide either a bridge or a barrier to helping them.¹⁷⁴

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY

We seek to integrate systemic thinking, theological principles, biblical theology, and psychological aspects, spirit theological, and social aspects in its interrelationship of complex systems as we obtain understanding and insight into a biblical and theological understanding and relevancy on a theology of the urban city. We will examine the urban and ancient city of Sodom and Gomorrah in its spiritual, biblical, and theological contexts. The urban theologian, author Robert C. Linthicum writes in his powerful work called, *City of God, City of Satan*, two basic themes exist as the foundation for urban ministry regardless of the tough issues facing the people in the city. Linthicum views the city as the “battleground between God and Satan and the vocation of Jesus Christ, and the church as God’s advance, his thrusting wedge into the city.” The city is the land of God’s creation, deeply loved by the Lord. In contrast he sees the urban city as both personal and systemic evil dominated by demonic principalities and powers, rulers of darkness. It

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 446.

doesn't matter how severe a battle, it is God's plan to establish his kingdom there. God seeks to do this through Christ and through His Church.¹⁷⁵

The church must reckon seriously the city as the battleground as we seek to win individuals to Christ and to build a church. Linthicum said:

"Jesus came, we discovered, to release people, a city's systems, and the entire created order from the power of sin, death, and the law. He did so by taking upon himself all that evil could ever do; he thus freed us from evil's complex grasp. To this the church witnesses in its prayer, its presence, its proclamation, and its practice, as it works for the empowerment of the poor (the victims of principalities), the liberation of the powerful (those seduced by the systems), and the reformulation of the city into a godly community (the kingdom of God)."¹⁷⁶

The twenty-first century minister, pastor, leader, and Christians are not going to be above the confusion, noise, power, and evil of the city. We are all in the middle of it and feel its affects everywhere today. That is reality, and we are challenged in our Christian life and ministries to understand that warfare (spiritual warfare) for what it is. When we do ministry, when we do truth rather than just hear truth, Christians are caught in the center of that warfare as we minister and seek the health, wealth and happiness of the city and its' citizens, on the contrary, the principalities and powers choose to attack us at our most vulnerable point.¹⁷⁷

"Our action in the world, our pneumatic political discipleship, is guided by biblical teachings, stories, and parables and paradigms of the divine action of love, justice, and shalom. The poor, defined as all those oppressed spiritually, politically, economically, and socially, are in need of the Spirits' Liberation."¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Robert Linthicum. *City of God, City of Satan*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), p. 234.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 234.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 235.

¹⁷⁸ Villafaña, *A Prayer for the City*, p. 26.

What emerged from the research is to present each topic heading beginning with the biblical theology of ‘*hospitality*’. We used the word, “*hospitality*” for the purpose of focusing and gleaning the study of the urban city of Sodom and Gomorrah in context of our observations from scriptural references. In practical terms, ‘*hospitality*’ is the spirit we know is active, passionate, in leading our ministry in outreach as leaders in the city. The use of ‘*hospitality*’ is our user-friendly guide in our cordial treatment and intervention strategy to the complex issue of addictions in our city and in this report. Because of this, we proceed to treat our theology of the city as it is laid out in its proper conceptualization.

We realize the diversity in the city amongst cultures, religions, beliefs, languages, and social practices are cause to approach the theology of the city with genuine ‘*hospitality*’. The city and its systems are so complex in doing any ministry. *Hospitality* is an important theme in the book of Genesis, Chapter 18 and 19 according to many theologians. The term ‘*hospitality*’ for this theology of the city is a framework for this work and for the addictions ministry. From a theological and biblical perspective, we must apply what we learn doing “truth” and applying the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ in our ministry to addictive people in the 21st century. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit” say the Lord of hosts.”(Zechariah 4:6).

The theology of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah is the city reflected upon here. It is significant to integrate God’s wisdom and knowledge in a “**theology of place**”, **theology of peace**, and **‘theology of prayer’** where we again use the term **‘hospitality’** as one of the greatest revelations to learn pertinent lessons of the inhabitants of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah and for the theology of the city in the 21st century. The importance

of the spirit of hospitality exhibited by many biblical characters that represented God in their spiritual journeys is relevant to the leaders of urban ministry now. In these biblical texts, God is calling us as leaders, prophets, pastors, evangelists, teachers, and ministers to an intimate place in God. God is calling for effective disciples and teaching of His Word in using our gifts to the glory of God. Our theology of the city and its relationship to an addictions outreach ministry in the church and in the city to addictive people who are hurting, broken, blind, and shattered, is to bring the unadulterated Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost, the sick, the ostracized, at any cost.

Today's city scene is faced with an epidemic of violence, homelessness, disasters, gangs, death and addictions of all kinds. My focus in this theology of the city does not just include drug addiction but practicing the presence of God. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, joy, and peace. There is something powerful when God's woman or man brings practical and personal experiences to help those who suffer from addictions. However, the misconceptions about this addictions ministry need clarification in its conceptualization. The ministry cannot be limited to only substance abuse and drug addiction, but all people who suffer from some affect of addictions. The behaviors associated with this often shunned, disguised, taboo subject of evil, and sin, the addictive person needs immediate life-saving help. Too often the interrelatedness of the drug trade, power centers, political issues, medical, family and social interconnectedness to this disease cannot be covered in this report. More research and study of addictions and how the church can play a role in the healing and empowerment of a people whose lives are destroyed and separated from God is our purpose and passion for the ministry. There is a medical element to addictions being a disease, which we did not cover entirely

in this report, but it is a disease according to medical expertise rather than a moral issue that this thesis takes into account. The gospel is written and proclaimed to all people regardless of their conditions and backgrounds, regardless where they live, or what they have accumulated as far as material things, and regardless of their sins. We seek to minister to those people who are broken, sick, aliens, blind, lost souls considered by many to be society's rejects, poor, unlovable, unworthy, and hopeless. You do not have to be an addictive person to engage in issues of insecurity, poverty, sexual addictions and promiscuity, lying and cheating, manipulation and deceptive practices all of these are common in life. We were all once in darkness before we knew and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. All of these infirmities we find in the city. There is sin in the city and in the world. I am persuaded that there are underlying causes in the use and abuse of substances and addictions, anything that becomes god other than God the Father, the only true and living God in a person's life. This leads people to engage in idolatry and perhaps progression to an addiction.

The world's systems are corrupt and evil creating every kind of injustice and humanity is paying the price in the city. The urban leaders of the twentieth first century will need teams and training in systems thinking and a new view of the city as we plan purposeful and effective ministry in our cities.

Let's begin by introducing the 'theology of place'.

A PARADIGM FOR HOLISTIC HEALING AND EMPOWERMENT IN COMMUNITY

I. Theology of Place (context)

a. Hospitality of the Compassion for the City (Genesis 18:1-8)

The research I attempt seeks to biblically and theologically understand the theology of the city which is changing in the 21st century due to unavoidable and unexpected real issues. The city is now a mosaic of beautiful cultures and diversity in language, lifestyles, music, worship, and multicultural, bi-dialectal diversity in its place. Many inhabitants of our cities are facing critical problems economically, politically, judiciously, legally, and psychologically. Pastors, ministers, prophets, evangelists, teachers, lay leaders, and the body of Christ are doing ministry in serious and dangerous times. The ministerial challenge understands the extent of evil and its influence in the city, and in every institution on the face of the earth. To impact the city with a more effective witness of the Gospel is the desire of many pastors and local ministers. That is doing truth, applying biblical principles, and allowing effective Spirit Liberation to the oppressed and poor, gangs and violence, which drugs and addictions fall into this category.

God gave the men of Sodom a fair test. God was not ignorant of the city's wicked practices, but in his fairness and patience he gave the people of Sodom one last chance to repent. God always waits patiently giving people the opportunity to turn to him. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance"(2 Peter 3:9). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a prominent world-renowned example in Israelite tradition of God's total judgment. (Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 1:9; Jeremiah 49:18; Amos 4:11). In the passage of Genesis 18:1-8, the main issue here is '**hospitality**' to secretly divine visitors. Here, the sanctity of hospitality is threatened by "the men of

the city" (its inhabitants), who wish to rape (know) the guests. Let's look at this more closely in the biblical scriptures:

"When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, where are you going? Where did you come from? He answered, 'We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the Lord. No one has taken me into his house. We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants—me, your maidservant, and the young man with us. We don't need anything.' 'You are welcomed at my house', the old man said. 'Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square.' So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink. While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, 'Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.' The owner of the house went outside and said to them, 'No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing.'" (Judges 19:17-23).

Though many people and scholars assume disapproval of male homosexual rape, the central point of this passage of scripture is how this threat by the townspeople violates the value of hospitality. Imagine the same treatment of those who suffer from addictions must feel when they are violated and unwelcome for treatment or help from their illness and/or condition by people who claim to love all people. In this particular text, '**hospitality**' is valued so strongly in this context it positively portrays Lot's offer of his virgin daughters in place of his guests. At this point, you may ask yourself, how can any father (Lot in this case) give his daughters to be ravished by a mob of perverts, just to protect two strangers? Although it was the custom of the day to protect guests at any cost, this terrible suggestion reveals how deeply sin had been absorbed into Lot's life. Lot had become hardened to evil acts in an evil city. In my local town of Brockton, (and in the state of Massachusetts), this hardening of hearts and to the evil acts of men, is also prevalent among men in solving the problem of addictions and addressing these tough

issues effectively. Whatever Lot's motives were, we see here an illustration of Sodom's terrible wickedness—wickedness so great that God had to destroy the entire city.¹⁷⁹

The biblical account of Sodom and Gomorrah shows us the disapproval of male homosexual rape is assumed here, yet the threat of the inhabitants of the city and their actions violates the value of '**hospitality**'. Lot's virtue is demonstrated by his willingness to go to such a length—and put his own body in danger (vv. 9-10) to avoid violation of his guests. Lot puts his own body in danger. In his actions, there is a witness to divine love, justice, and kindness we can adapt for all strangers in the city. Doing ministry in the city today, there is certainly dangers unaware. Not just with the inhabitants, but with unforeseen forces of evil that reside in many cities, individuals, groups, and systems. It is important in the ministry to addicts, we are keenly aware as we encounter these evil forces. Personally, and professionally, observing and participating in drugs and addictions, substance abuse and rejection, here lays much witchcraft and abominations of all kinds in acts of sinfulness and wickedness. We will encounter evil unaware in the city and in individuals. As a result of Lot's protection of his guests, he like Noah finds favor with God and he and his household are rescued out of destruction.¹⁸⁰

As Professor Villafaña writes, “may we experience the Spirit’s liberation in all areas of our lives and may we be opened up to the Spirit of life, as we discern and follow his Liberating action in the world to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we live in the

¹⁷⁹ *The Life Application Study Bible*. (Zondervan House and Tyndale House, 1988), pp. 38-39.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 38-40.

Spirit, let us also walk (stoichomen) – (keep in step with – better still-dance after) the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).”¹⁸¹

There are two terms here ‘compassion’ and ‘hospitality’ clarifying action for each topic’s purposes of the value and significance of these terms together. From these passages of scripture, we’re able to relate the importance of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah to how we view the theology of the city to the proposed ministry on addictions. The theology of the city we find communicated is laid out for us in the scriptures of Genesis 18 and 19. In addition, insight is gained through the book of Ezekiel 16:48-50. We find examples, contrasts and comparisons of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah in these texts is similar to the cries of a person who suffers from an addiction. God’s response to sin in the city is manifested in the text. We witness this affirmation in our own experiences, research, and encounters when God deals with our own sin and addictions. The condition of addiction leaves one in a state of desperation. Where to get help is oftentimes isolating and shameful. It is in this ‘context of place’ or theology of place that we observe, analyze, and ponder discovering that God is Sovereign; (He Rules), and God does what he wants, when he wants, and how he wants. As God’s agents, God has a purpose in mind with every move he makes. When God moves he has His creation on His mind in whatever state they find themselves.

What significance does the term ‘*hospitality*’ mean for this addictions ministry and for the city? Each topic heading in this section outlines its value and its importance for our ministry in modeling ‘doing truth’, taking effective action for outreach on behalf of people who are strangers and who are addictive without hope, refuge, and a voice in the city and in the church. The term ‘*hospitality*’ is the beginning word for each theme in

¹⁸¹ Villafaña, *A Prayer for the City*, 29.

the theology of the city presented in this section. As 21st century ministers and leaders, the church and its mission is empowered by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God on behalf of inhabitants (guests) of the city. The word ‘hospitality’ is used as a noun, (it is also a verb) which means friendly, cordial treatment of guests, hospitable is an adjective describing the noun hospitality that means friendly and generous to guests, cordial.¹⁸²

It is within this context of defining the term ‘*hospitality*’; we learned how God is a friend of Abraham who is walking by faith in God’s established covenant although here he enters into a new area of faith. Abram’s name was changed for he entered the presence of God and his life was transformed forever. God is concerned about someone standing in the gap for the city. God sees all of us as strangers and as his guests hoping each of us would give our lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God welcomes all of us into the kingdom of God with open hearts, minds, and souls. God invites us in the Eucharist to eat at the table where we find intimacy and we also find betrayal by the strange hand of a friend. God revealed to his prophet and friend, Abraham, the secrets of Sodom and Gomorrah. A prophet, as mediator of God’s covenant, Abraham received and communicated God’s will and in this relationship had peculiar access and supernatural power for intercession for the city. How important ‘*hospitality*’ is to guests when they enter into the city? Extremely important!¹⁸³

The Bible records in Genesis 19:1 that the gateway of the city was the meeting place for city officials and other men to discuss current events and transact business. It was a place of authority and status where a person could see and be seen. It is here that Lot held a very important position in the government and in the city. Lot associated with

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¹⁸³ Guthrie, D., J.A. Motyer, Stibbs, and D.J. Wiseman. *The New Bible Commentary*. (WM.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI and Intervarsity Press, London, 1970), p. 98.

those in the city because the angels found him at the city gate. It was Lot's position in Sodom that perhaps showed his reluctance to leave.¹⁸⁴ The city of Brockton is multicultural and we must consider this factor in our missions, in our hospitality of guests, and our ministry in the city.

In the Bible, the guard was placed at the east of the Garden of Eden and humankind was sent away in an easterly direction. This geographical movement of humankind is important in the Book of Genesis. Later in Genesis, we find east referring to the direction of the city of Babylon (Genesis 11:2), and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 13:11). The return from the east is the return to the Promised Land (Genesis 14:17-20). As we examined the twin terms, ‘*hospitality* and ‘*compassion*’ they go together when doing truth in this proposed ministry to addictions. You cannot do one without the other. Let’s look at the word ‘**compassion**’ and take a critical yet brief look at our understanding of compassion. The word, ‘*compassion*’ is derived from the Latin words *pati* and *cum*, which together means ‘*to suffer with*’.¹⁸⁵ Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, to welcome strangers, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears, and to cry mercy for us all. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. How can we have compassion without hospitality towards our neighbor, or to the one on the receiving end of such acts of love (*agape*) as we **do truth** in our urban centers? This sounds like urban ministry to and so much more. *Compassion* means full immersion in the condition of being human. It is sometimes

¹⁸⁴ *The Life Application Bible*, p. 38.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

thought of as a general kindness or tenderheartedness but it is important for us to acknowledge and understand this word ‘compassion’ as something more to be understood in the context of suffering. Compassion is not one of our natural responses to suffering rather resistance and even protest evokes in us the avoidance of pain and we consider anyone who feels attracted to suffering abnormal, or at least unusual.¹⁸⁶

Throughout history in the life of Jesus, he demonstrates and commands: “Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate”. This requires a total conversion of heart, soul, and mind. This requires ‘*hospitality*’ and ‘*hospitable*’ character. When we ‘remove the veil’ of intimacy with God, a radical call goes to the very depth of our souls. It is a call that goes right against the grain of the worlds’ systems in our cities. There is no individual stardom in the message found in the New Testament when Paul exhorts the Christians of Philippi to live a compassionate life with the mind of Christ. Paul explains what this life consists of and that there must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always considering the other person to be better than you, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of the other people’s interest instead (Philippians 2:3-4). Both, *hospitality* and *compassion* our biblical foundations of the launching pad for a proposed ministry to addictions and the people who suffer with this condition.¹⁸⁷

b. Hospitality of the Promised City (Genesis 18:16-19)

God’s relationship and response to the city of Sodom and Gomorrah is one of love, hospitality, compassion, mercy, and justice. God reveals himself as Judge in the city. The character of this city was perceived as the ‘city of Satan’ where sin, evil, and

¹⁸⁶ McNeill, Donald P., Douglas A. Morrison, and Henri J. M. Nouwen. *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*. (Doubleday, New York, 1966), p. 4.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 4-6.

wickedness prevailed. We find in the words of theologian Reinhold Neibuhr's,

Theologian of Public Life, a consuming thought here:

"In short, history means the continuation of both sin and grace. The resolution of history's problems 'is not in terms of the manifestation of divine power *over* evil' – as sinners all, that would kill us all, and end history itself. It is 'in terms of the manifestations of the divine love and mercy *to* evil – since we are all unrighteous. God through Christ manifests the divine conquest of evil 'through forgiveness and renewal rather than through power and sovereignty, that is, in and through human freedom and not over it. The very character of human nature, then, makes us the active agents of a restless history. This same nature also means that God works in relation to the exercise of human freedom in an open history.'"¹⁸⁸

Ironically, Sodom and Gomorrah was a city where people were rich, wealthy, and had access to many resources. But these inhabitants were full of pride, haughtiness, doing all kinds of abominations producing a wicked grave city to live in. The people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah had an excess of food, resources, and wealth yet did not share with the poor and needy so they were selfish and delivered injustices to their neighbors. We know it is God's desire for all humanity to be responsible for social justice in the world.¹⁸⁹ The city of Brockton and the state of Massachusetts is likened to Sodom and Gomorrah in our approach to the city's complexity.

A professor of theology, Rosalie Ryan, writes: "Yet for many students and teachers of theology, there is still something missing. In a world where war, devastation, and death are becoming continually widespread and where total destruction is a distinct possibility, more is needed than just the approach offered by specialized scholarly

¹⁸⁸ Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Making of Modern Theology*. Editor Larry Rasmussen. (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1988) pp. 30-31.

¹⁸⁹ *The Life Application Bible*, pp. 38-40.

disciplines...more active in communicating the relevance of God's words to men is urged.”¹⁹⁰

“God is crying out to be heard in our daily lives and it is the risk of proclamation to carry through the word-event inaugurated by Jesus, by saying in human language what God has to say to us so it is heard. All too often a doctrine of the word of God leaves what God has to say on a remote pedestal of Biblical language so that one must infer God has nothing to say about life where I am actually living it.”¹⁹¹

“The Christian church is a community of hopeful believers, who are not afraid of life or death, of present or future history, being persuaded that the whole of life and all historical vicissitudes stand under the sovereignty of a holy, yet merciful, God whose will is supremely revealed in Christ.”¹⁹²

“It is obvious, in short, that the church may become involved in a more grievous error than the world, precisely because it is the bearer of a Gospel according to which human truths and virtues are rendered problematic. One may question whether any fragment of the modern church understands as well as the prophets of Israel understood how severely the judgment of God falls upon the community which is the bearer of the judgment. It falls with particular severity upon the mediator of the judgment because the mediator is always tempted to claim an unproblematic security as a reward and consequence of his mediation. The truth of the Gospel must be preached today to a generation which hoped that historical development would gradually emancipate man from the ambiguity of his position of strength and weakness and would save him from the sin into which he fall by trying to evade or deny the contradiction in which he lives. Experience has proved that mode of salvation to be an illusion. But a Gospel which can penetrate through this illusion and save men from the idolatrous confidence in history as a redeemer will also shake the false islands of security which men have sought to establish history in the name of the Gospel. If the ‘weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ’ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5), they will also pull down many a stronghold which has been ostensibly erected in the name of Christ. If God can take the ‘things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence’

¹⁹⁰ Ryan, Rosalie. *New Testament Themes for Contemporary Man*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Halls, 1969) v.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, vi.

¹⁹² Neibuhr, *The Making of Modern Theology*, p. 230.

(1 Corinthians 1:25), he will surely not exempt priest or prophet or any community of the ‘saved’.”¹⁹³

Abraham was promised by God to be the father of many nations. A description of ideal hospitality of Abraham is when he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. He ran from the tent entrance to meet them and he bowed down to the ground. Abraham serves his guests with attentiveness, compassion, humility, and hospitality. He literally bows before them and becomes their servant. In our addictions ministry, we must do likewise.¹⁹⁴

c. Hospitality of the Outcry of the City (Genesis 18:20-33; 19:13)

The Bible declares the Lord said, “How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin!” God then decides to go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to him, and if not, God said he will know. God knows what he is going to do but does not reveal his plans to us until he goes down and reveals himself as Judge and Merciful God. God is merciful because we know He saves Lot’s family from the doom of the city. God is concerned about the social justice of the city and needs someone to stand in the gap on behalf of the city. It is God who is sovereign here and tells us his secrets on a need to know basis for God moves with a purpose and with compassion. Sometimes, God does not reveal some secrets or things to us because we are not ready to receive “truth” and what God knows we can’t handle.¹⁹⁵

Abraham, therefore, supposing that all are to share a common destiny, asks that a few just men may win pardon for the many wicked in the city. Yahweh’s answers

¹⁹³ Ibid, 234-235.

¹⁹⁴ *The Life Application Study Bible, NIV.* (Zondervan and Tyndale House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1988), 38-40.

¹⁹⁵ DMIN Lecture Notes from 2nd Residency. (CUME-Boston, MA, 2005).

approve the part the saints have to play in saving the world. But Abraham's bid for mercy does not venture below the number ten. According to Jeremiah 5:1 and Ezekiel 22:30, God would pardon Jerusalem even if only *one* just man could be found there. Finally, in Isaiah 53, it is the suffering of the one servant that is to save the whole race, but this prophecy was destined to remain unintelligible until it was fulfilled in Christ.¹⁹⁶

In the complexity of city life, God still hears the outcry of our city Brockton and any other city in the world. The vision to be an instrument of Grace and a wounded healer is all too clear as we build a hospitable character in reaching out to others whose cries are unheard or ignored by society. Most often it is only when trouble knocks on your personal door do we plan to implement effective strategies and resolutions to the problems in our cities. As ministers of the Gospel we must be prepared in actions of hospitality to the cries of those who are suffering from addictions in the city and on the city corner. Even those who suffer like Job, the undeserved suffering can recover and receive a reward for their perseverance and trust in God.

"Open communication and an understanding of the interrelatedness of systems are important in implementing effective ministry. Theologian and author, Reinhold Neibuhr writes in his book, *Christ and Culture*, "the deep disease of man, the self-contradiction in which he is involved as individual and member of human societies, is his denial of the law of his being." It is the church's function that perhaps has drifted away from its foundational purposes. He adds, "the sin of the church—the horrible apostasy of the Church—has consisted in denying its own function, which is to proclaim to men their spiritual condition, the eternal foundation on which it rests, the manifestation which has

¹⁹⁶ The New Bible Commentary, 35.

been made it by the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of the Son of God, and the gift of the Spirit.”¹⁹⁷

It is this faith in Jesus Christ throughout history, introduced into our culture, into our church, our human community, through this person and event. Now we see it revealed in us through him, and we realize it was always there, and without it we should never have lived at all. According to Neibuhr, “without the historical incarnation of that faith in Jesus Christ we should be lost in faithlessness. As the given historical reality in our human history, he is the cornerstone on which we build and the rock of offense. He is simply there with his faith and with his creation of faith.”¹⁹⁸

d. Hospitality of the Healing of the City (Genesis 19:1-2).

God has given warning and sent messengers to warn against the destruction of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah. God gave the city time to repent of their sins. When we call upon God, Immanuel, God With Us (Matthew 1:23), we enter into a new relationship of intimacy with Him. By calling on Him, we recognize God has come to share our lives with us in solidarity and in all our affairs. It does not mean that God solves our problems, shows us the way out of our confusion, or offers answers for our many questions. He might do all of that, but his solidarity consists in the fact that he is willing to enter with us into our problems, confusions, and unanswered questions and prayers. God commits himself to live with us, to share our joys and pains, to defend and protect, and to suffer along with us. Like Job we will worship and trust in God, believing on His promises. The cost of following God is minuscule compared to his faithfulness to us. God is our refuge, our helper, our healer, our shepherd, and our redeemer.

¹⁹⁷ Neibuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 222.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 255.

The purposes of healing in the proposed addiction ministry is in reality a lifetime process filled with actions of ‘hospitality’ for those people who need healing, freedom, and love by Our Healer, Jesus Christ. We learned that God does not heal everyone. In regards to ‘hospitality’, we stand on the Word of God found in scriptures to believe for healing regardless if God heals a man immediately or takes him through life without being healed but crippled (like Mepheboshath, Saul’s grandson) but he is welcomed at the Master’s Table to eat and dine because of his faith. We are assured of God’s blessings. God acts when he wants, and he acts in mysterious ways in the world and in the cities. The following scriptures tell of events where healing took place and also where we are not sure if healing took place at that time. In many sermonic events, it is revealed that all God has to do is speak the Word and a person can be healed. The full understanding of that deliverance or healing cannot be clearly understood until the person is involved and a part of the kingdom.

“When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6).

“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” (Luke 9:1-2).

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.” (Matthew 9:35)

All of these scriptures promise us healing for our sickness, our diseases, our wounds, our sins and our addictions. If you are equipped and trained in the knowledge of Scripture it is one of the greatest weapons in our arsenal to confront the forces of Satan at work in our cities. God gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak; this is good news as we go forth to minister in complex urban settings. The theology of

the city is ever-changing as we deal with tough topics, real issues, critical crisis, and major shifts in the city and in the church. I am particularly concerned about ministry to those who suffer from addictions and the Christian education of this tough issue we face daily in our city.

By sharing in the wholeness of the one in whom no competition exists, (Jesus Christ), we can enter into new, compassionate relationships with each other. By accepting our identities from the one who is the giver of all life, we can be with each other without distance or fear. We will exude with kindness and hospitality with a high regard for others regardless of their sexual persuasion, sickness, infirmity, diseases, culture, religious affiliation, ethnicity, and addictions. Here we embrace those addictive people that society wants to disregard, ignore, and treat as mere strangers. Many like them in our society need to be healed, and made whole if the truth be told. This new identity, the self of Jesus Christ, free from greed, grandiosity, and the desire for power, allows us to enter so fully and unconditionally into sufferings of others that it becomes possible for us to heal the sick and call the dead to life and be ye healed! God reaches out to us with open arms in spite of our conditions, sickness, afflictions, sin, and addictions.¹⁹⁹

II. Theology of Peace

a. Hospitality of Peace for Mission/Ministry in the City (Genesis 19:3-13).

“Nazareth was a Jewish ghetto in Galilee, the northern province of Palestine. Many of Jesus’ neighbors had been displaced by the Romans, and worked as poor tenant farmers or shepherds for wealthy landowners in Jerusalem. Space was tight and each family had to settle for a one-room mud hut along with a

¹⁹⁹ McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen, *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*, pp. 20-21.

dirt alley. Water and resources were in short supply; no one had to learn to share with the neighbors. In such crowded and inhumane conditions, it was tempting to ignore the weak, the disabled and the elderly who couldn't work, and it was perhaps common to expel the sick (children and adults) diseased lest contamination spread.”²⁰⁰

“Was it this environment that helped Jesus learn that his neighbor was not simply the person next door, but the old woman down the road, who needed food and water, brought to her? Or was the neighbor a leper in the caves outside the village who needed oil for his sores and longed for friendship? Perhaps Jesus learned about **table ministry** from his mother, Mary, by watching her invite a blind man for a meal, or sharing what little she had with a widow. Was it during these years that Jesus learned to befriend the poorest of the poor and to make outcasts feel welcomed and loved? Jesus seemed to be especially involved with people who were rejected by society. He learned what it felt like to be a marginal person. He felt the pain of degradation. Jesus was especially concerned about outcasts. Prostitutes, many of whom were drug addicted and who suffered from addictions, abused as children, were rejected as sinners who could not be forgiven by God. Many Jews felt intense alienation toward the occupying Roman soldiers as well as toward other Gentiles. Slaves and the free were hostile toward each other as were urban dwellers and peasants. Men felt superior to women and husbands often viewed their wives as servants and property.”²⁰¹

In an addictions ministry, it was noted in this report the double standards set by society when a women is seeking treatment for an addictions versus men, this is true in the church too. Today, we admonish those churches that eradicate the traditions and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in these matters. Too often the stigmas and taboos in addictions manifests itself as soon as one admits she is addictive or an addict.

Therefore, it is necessary in the 21st century to examine and model Jesus’ example as we seek the shalom (peace) of the city and all of its urban dwellers. In his book, *Voices from the Drug Culture*, Harrison Pope, Jr. began his work here as a thesis at Harvard College under the direction of three outstanding tutors, Erik Erikson, Dr. Paul Walters, and George W. Goethals, who says, poignantly,

²⁰⁰ Hill, Brennan. *Jesus Center of Christianity*. (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000), p. 54.

²⁰¹ Ibid, p.53.

“Family life, like the rest of society, will not change rapidly; many more youths will feel too sheltered and too lonely. Women’s liberation, I feel, is a hope for the future; it may lead to a new generation of mothers not so desperately bound to their children, and fathers not so remote. But the more immediate answer is knowledge; parents must learn to appreciate how powerful the feelings of shelter or loneliness can be, and how imperative it is for their children to express them. Drugs are surrounded by a complex subculture, the attractions of which are superimposed upon, and colored by, the effects and long-term aftereffects of use. The particular drugs chosen by a youth, the frequency with which he uses them, and the group with which he associates – all these determine whether his experiences will be enlightening or destructive, benign or catastrophic. Once again, the problem is usually lack of knowledge. Many intelligent adults, despite serious concern, have not learned to distinguish between vastly different forms of drug use. They exaggerate the evils of some drugs and deny those of others: a marijuana cigarette constitutes “drug abuse;” three martinis do not. This inconsistency may stimulate what many are striving to suppress.²⁰²

In his reference notes, Pope explains, “the problem of addictions and the incidence of drug use among various populations of Americans and the world’s cultures are difficult to study and for many to acknowledge. For many drug users and those who suffer from addictions, would refuse to answer a statistically oriented survey, because it would seem inhumane perhaps a violation of their rights in today’s society. So we are caution to present data about this addictions ministry guarded and vague in some areas.”²⁰³

He concludes that participant-observation provides a great deal of information not accessible to either of the techniques of laboratory study and the clinical thoroughness of the individual case history. An idea of the inner workings of the subculture and the day-to-day actions and feelings of its members is what we propose as the model of small

²⁰² Pope, Jr. Harrison. *Voice from the Drug Culture*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 126-127.

²⁰³ Pope, 129.

group intervention. This information is essential for an understanding of drug use and I think addictions as well.”²⁰⁴

Seeking a holistic view of healing and empowerment brings about preparation for spiritually, psychologically, socially, and strategically confronting complex and heterogeneous dynamics within the city’s systems. The cordial attitude and the acts of common good for all urban dwellers takes into account the giving of hospitality which is the church’s role in the 21st century. Theologian and author, Dr. Eldin Villafaña writes, “urban complexity requires pastors be trained in the basics of sociocultural systems, and that they fit into a ministry that seeks to be effective over the long run. For it is gearing our ministry to the long-term concerns by long-term involvement.”²⁰⁵

We seek the peace of the city under persecution because we love God and we belong to Jesus Christ so opposition will come from a variety of sources. As ambassadors of the hospitality of peace we regard people to love and to care for them regardless of nationality, culture, ethnic backgrounds, and political affiliations. What’s going in the city today in the 21st century? Are there negative open discussions or are there positive open solutions-discussions? Who really cares? In today’s societies and in past history that being an addict in our society is extremely difficult. “Drug use breeds on certain forms of human misery”. The major problem posed by narcotic addiction and other addictions is not at all the problem of getting people to stay away from narcotic drugs and addiction behaviors. It is the problem of getting at the sources of such human misery. Unless and until we have got to work with a will to do something effective about

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 127.

²⁰⁵ Villafaña, *Seek The Peace of the City*, p. 99.

coping with those who suffer from addictions, we will not have begun to touch on the real problem of narcotics addiction and other addictions as well.²⁰⁶

“The church is not to dominate the state, and the state will not dominate the church. A relationship based on mutual respect for the empowerment and development of the spiritual, mental, and physical well being of all human beings is essential to their successful treatment. Dr. Harvey Cox says, “Christianity has become a powerful force”.

God sends out messengers to the city and when he does people need to obey God. God sent the angels to Sodom and Gomorrah to destroy the city for there was no peace in the city. It is for the sake of the people, that God came down to Sodom as Judge and we witness the justice of God.”²⁰⁷

“Urban heterogeneity requires that cross-cultural training be a central concern in all legitimate urban training programs.”²⁰⁸ “City populations often feel very manipulated by many dynamics in their environments. And too often have been let down, discouraged, dishonored, disrespected, and threatened by their environments and the powers that run the city. The poor, particularly, are manipulated and thus are very leery of new plans designed to benefit them. The city networks almost everything that is in it, for good or for evil. Social problems such as drugs and family breakup, once associated with inner cities, are problems everywhere today. When the spiritual and social needs of people in cities are met, we will have already begun to meet the future needs of people living in the suburbs. We must be concerned to train people to take the city very seriously. Our Christian future demands that we train them as best we can, under God, to perform as productively as possible for the kingdom of God.”²⁰⁹

The Peace (or the Shalom) of the city best describes the blessings and promises for each person of God’s covenant people. The covenant invited them into a relationship of peace with God, with their true identity, with others, and with all of creation. There was a great concern for the poor, the widows, and the aliens. Special

²⁰⁶ Chein, Isidor, Gerard Donald, Robert S. Lee, and Eva Rosenfeld. *The Road to H: Narcotics, Delinquency, and Social Policy*. (New York: Basic Books, 1964), p. 381.

²⁰⁷ DMin Lecture Notes 2nd Residency. (Boston, MA: CUME/BOSTON, 2005).

²⁰⁸ Villafaña, *Seek the Peace of the City*, p. 99.

²⁰⁹ Villafaña, *Seek the Peace of the City*, p. 98.

efforts were made to incorporate aliens into the covenant community. All of them were special guests. Likewise, we are to keep our tents ready so that we can practice gathering around the tabernacle for worship. A tent as a worship center is for a people on the move with a vision. The people of Israel were a free people, accountable only to God. Place could not capture them. Whenever God commanded, “Move!” They obeyed. It is during their journeys that God went before them in a cloudy pillar by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Mission for peace in our cities requires that we sacrifice, denying ourselves, and being a blessing to others.²¹⁰

b. Hospitality of Justice for the City (Genesis 19:24).

In the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, there are two facets of God’s character present in community. God moves with great patience (agreeing to spare a wicked city for ten good people) and his fierce anger moves in (destroying both cities). Growing spiritually takes time and develops a deeper respect and trust in God because of his anger toward sin, and also a deeper love for God because of his patience when we sin. The consequences of sin are death, and we witness many lives alienated from God due to their addictions. How many people living in our cities and those living in darkness all around us today are alienated from God? Many people who do not understand the gospel of Jesus Christ and its impact on their everyday lives. The author and Theologian Eldin Villafaña states:

“The times are changing. The growth of the Latino, Haitian, and Cape Verdean, African, and Brazilian population in the United States means an increase in the complexity of our needs and problems. Therefore, there is a need for clergy more formally trained to confront these complexities. Moreover, while we have always produced our leaders, they have never had the voice and the power in the larger

²¹⁰ Shenk, David W. *God’s Call to Mission*. (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994), pp. 39-43.

church structures, let alone in society at large. A larger and more complex populace will increasingly demand greater voice and opportunity in the existing denominational, ecclesiastical, and secular political institutions. This opportunity should be based on justice, leadership, and representational policies and not on whether we have the right degrees from the right schools. But experience shows that credentials still open doors even, sad to say, in the church world. In order to service our communities and represent our communities better in the years to come, we will need to either create our own such institutions or impact change on existing ones.²¹¹

This idea is true for the Black community in America as well who has the highest drug rates, HIV/AIDS, unwed pregnancies, incarceration of black men (highest prison enrollment), economic, poor living conditions, and educational and emotional scars that go as far back as slavery in their community than any other group. A scar is such a word that signifies a condition beyond repair but the devil is a liar. Economic injustice and slavery (over 260 years of Jim Crow in the South) has often been neglected when we communicate history in America and its real ramifications for Black America. In which the ghetto of America, was strategically developed for poor black disenfranchised people who were not considered a people but a product (a commodity to be traded, sold and bought like a bar of candy or soap) for the slave trade producing millions of dollars, making men wealthy, and a prosperous economy on the backs of black slaves and their families. There is a voice of one crying in the wilderness. The church ought to be that voice all over the world.

“The movement for systemic justice understands that oppressed people have strengths, skills, cultural assets, and the responsibility to act corporately for their own common good. It works for long-term goals and more permanent solutions that create more just social arrangements.”²¹²

²¹¹ Villafañe, *Seek the Peace of the City*, pp. 120-121.

²¹² Harper, *Urban Churches, Vital Signs: Beyond Charity Towards Justice*, pp. 300-301.

c. Hospitality of the Hope of the City

The church needs to position itself to confront evil in the world regardless of its form and manifestation. People who support the good of everyone's life, and who are Christ-centered in their good works are usually characterized by gratitude and hospitality. Anger can make us active and can even unleash in us much creative energy. To persevere without visible success we need a spirit of gratitude. An angry action born of the experience of being hurt; a grateful action is born of the experience of healing. When gratitude is the source of our actions, our giving becomes receiving, and to those we minister become our ministers because in the center of our care for others we sense a caring presence, and in the midst of our efforts we sense an encouraging support. When this happens we can remain hopeful, joyful, peaceful, even when there are few successes to brag about. When we gather and pursue hope for the city in the name of Jesus, we are guided by the Holy Spirit to greet all as creations made by God.

We discovered in success in overcoming the illegal traffic in narcotics and in the treatment of individual addicts will still have done nothing toward meeting the manifold social and personal problems that make so many individuals vulnerable to drug use and addiction. The addictions ministry proposed in the church is a multipronged program center and a spiritual center designed to go far beyond the direct, manifest problems of addictions. Family casework services and special services allowing the increase support, intervention, and legitimate endeavors need supportive action. This goes beyond the scopes of this report, but our hope is to provide convincing evidence to the individual and to the church, and to city systems that these addicts do not stand alone and that his fate

does, in fact, matter to society and to provide him, in the fullest possible measure, with the safe havens, with the competencies, and aspirations most fitting to a human being.²¹³

As living manifestations of God's presence and light in the world, the city is the place where God shows compassion and brings hope through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. In the new city, God will live among us, within us, thus we are never alone. This is where the scars and wounds are carefully attended, poverty is dispelled and bearable, the whole creation will be made new. Transformation of the mind, by God's Word, brings a new thought pattern and view of success. The shalom of the city is the hope of Glory for all its citizens and already visible in the community of faith. There is hope for the deliverance and reconciliation of those who suffer from addictions. Restoration for drug abusers, our hope is they find their way home to God, and be filled with worship giving glory, honor, majesty, and power in Jesus' name.²¹⁴

d. Non-Hospitality of the Destruction of the City (Genesis 19:23-29).

God is sovereign; so we must gain a better understanding of His sovereignty in our society. God loves people but he hates the sin in people. Those leaders who are trained in the character and nature of God and who also have a deep personal relationship with God must address the sin issue in our pulpits, churches, and communities. There are so many churchgoers who are lonely, depressed, and unregenerate in their minds. God decided to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because there was not one righteous person to be found. The ungodly lifestyle and those many people who accepted the morals of Sodom including Lot's daughters came to a tragic end (19:30-38).

²¹³ Chein, Gerard, Lee, and Rosenfeld. *The Road to H*, p. 385.

²¹⁴ McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen, *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*, pp.126-129, 133-135.

The theology of the city and ministry in the city, too often displays the world's systems. The world's views and philosophies are distorted and unrealistic that many fall prey to being a victim rather than the victor. The gospel (good news) needs to be evangelized and a prophetic witness that demonstrates the power of the gospel bringing a spirit of hospitality, hopes, and love (agape) for all people. As Abraham ministered on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah, we also are called to minister on behalf of the people in our cities. God has commanded us to seek justice, peace, and love applying the truth of God's Word (not our own interpretations), to the lives of everyone.

"The classical missiological categories of the Church's mission that is viewed in a theology of peace for city missions was an enlightening experience for one trained in urban ministry. Some of the categories stand out here; they are '*Koinonia*' and '*Diakonia*' and '*shalom*'. '*Koinonia*' speaks of a church that lives in fellowship and in authentic community, one that has experienced and models for society 'the peace of God that transcends all understanding' – Philippians 4:7; the second, '*Diakonia*' speaks of a church, and of Christian ministry or service of Shalom to a hurting and broken humanity—an agent of reconciliation, welfare, and justice. The term graceful-'*shalom*' speaks of the essence of the gospel, and speaks to the mission of the church. The church must be an embodiment and an agent of shalom in our cities" which is expressed in the other two categories, mentioned here."²¹⁵

Without the Holy Spirit, we allow the city to be destroyed and its inhabitants to live in oppression, and destruction without hope. In Genesis 20, the Lord said, "How great is the outcry against the Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin!" I am certain God is speaking these same words about the cities all over the world and in my home city and state, Brockton, Massachusetts. God responds, "I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know. Here God comes down to Judge, which takes place in Heaven and on

²¹⁵ Villaña, *Seek the Peace of the City*, p. 11.

Earth. The city is the city of Satan rather than the city of God because all the inhabitants are wicked not one is safe from destruction and the divine judgment of God.²¹⁶

III. Theology of Prayer (spirituality)

Intercession for the City (Genesis 18:16-33).

The Lord chose Abraham to teach his household the ways of righteousness. God chose Abraham to stand in the gap (intercession) on behalf of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah. Are we willing to stand in the gap as God's chosen prophet? In Genesis 18:13 God charged Abraham, his household and his children after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice. Abraham communicates with His God, and is allowed to intercede before God that a few just men may win pardon from the Lord God for the many wicked people in the city. Like Moses (Exodus 32:9-14), Abraham negotiates with an angry God, appealing to God's righteousness. Yet, he does not avert the destruction of the cities. The rescue of Lot and his family displays mercy, love, and hope. However, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah occurs as Lot protected his guests at great lengths even to put his own body in danger. Lot showed hospitality to secretly divine angels/visitors. The Bible speaks about entertaining angels unaware here on earth. The men of the city threaten the sanctity of hospitality wanting to rape the guests. So Lot finds favor with God, however, the townspeople violate the value of hospitality. After Abraham speaks with the Lord as he intercedes for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is recorded the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham.

²¹⁶ Coogan, Michael, Ed. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible w/the Apocrypha*. (Oxford Press, 2001).

Most people in our cities use prayer minimally. There is no real training in the true meaning of prayer. Prayer is the vehicle to communicate with God. In the 911 disasters, it was as if the whole world was uniting in prayer. But only due to an emergency and a horrific disaster, do people really pray. Leaders today need to be trained in a theology of prayer and learn why we pray and how to pray for our cities. It is only fitting to seek scriptures to ask what did Jesus do. It is only fitting in our theology of prayer as we effectively intervene on behalf of those who suffer from addictions that we pray without ceasing.

Prayer in the city of Brockton is important to learn in the addictions ministry especially in complex urban systems. God will intervene on behalf of our prayers in the city of Brockton as He did in the city of Sodom and Gomorrah. God loves the city, God cares about the people in the city of Brockton, and God reigns in the city of Brockton. Christians need to look deep within themselves to see just what God has done on behalf of their redemption and on behalf of the resurrection. Not one soul should be lost in the city. Jesus offers salvation and freedom to all. As change agents in this addictions ministry, we are passionate about doing God's Will and doing it God's (strategic) Way. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Light."

As followers of Jesus Christ, Jesus is the very foundation on which to build the church regardless of the changing times. We build the addictions ministry on a firm foundation for holistic healing and empowerment to transform the very lives of those who suffer from addictions. Little prayer, little power, much prayer, much power!

CHAPTER FOUR: PROJECT DESIGN: EXAMINING LIFE IN RECOVERY AND RESTORATION

PROJECT DESIGN AND LEARNING TEAM HEXAGON PROCESS

The first step taken in the posed ministry question for the focus group was to brainstorm many questions before the initial meeting of the group. From these questions in Table.1 (see Table 1, p. 133) it was important to narrow down the questions to one focused question. This initial step was vital to come up with the best open-ended question for real communication and dialogue to take place in the group. My husband and I got together and brainstormed various questions. The list on Table 1.begins with the reflections and brainstorming of questions for the one open-ended question needed to establish for the focus group to hexagon at the meeting(s). As a husband and wife team, brainstorming these questions served as a great input to begin to weed out assumptions and expectations pertaining to the learning team. The brainstorming questions can be used for a future hexagon process in the future hexagon study of addictions.

We learned that this is a positive way to weed out any assumptions, and it will impede hindrances in gathering authentic information on the issue of addictions. We did not want to persuade or interfere with the free flowing of sharing ideas on what the group might say, based on our own personal expectations, experiences, and thoughts about addictions. We discovered there was a wide range of answers to these questions depending on the experience, knowledge, and understanding an individual had in addictions and drug abuse. One of the challenges of beginning the learning team for the hexagon process was to come up with the right focused-question for a complex issue such

as addictions. The brainstorming of questions assisted me in finalizing one pertinent questions to help the focus group in communication. Out of the brainstorming exercise we came up with 15 initial questions. (See Table 1)

The learning team was most effective in the ‘hexagoning’ process for the addictions ministry project. Again, the posed ministry question presented to the team was a result of my husband and I brainstorming many questions before the initial meeting of the group. The right open-ended question was very important to the hexagon process. It also helped in our thinking process to pursue those areas of addictions that Christians and non-Christians might ask someone in the ministry of addictions, and what is an addiction to who is an addict? I thought it necessary not to implement my own biases, mental models, perceptions, and prejudices since both of us are so personally connected to this topic.

Table 1. - Brainstorming Questions

- 1. How do you create a safe environment for people suffering from addictions?**
- 2. What does addiction mean to you personally?**
- 3. How do you define addiction or an addictive personality?**
- 4. What are some of the behaviors we need to be aware of?**
- 5. What are some of the patterns leading to addiction?**
- 6. How can a learning community effectively help people suffering from addictions?**
- 7. What are some of the ways or ideas to treat addictions?**
- 8. How much time does a person need treatment for addictions?**
- 9. How many times does a person need treatment for addictions?**
- 10. What are some addictions?**
- 11. In what ways does addiction affect the family?**
- 12. Have you or a family member experienced addictions?**
- 13. What role should the church play in the treatment of addictions?**
- 14. How does addiction begin in an individual's life?**
- 15. What individuals are prone to becoming addictive?**

[Modifications were made to the following questions #14 and #15 and added a question #16: 14, How has society solved the addiction problem? 15, Should the church play a role in treating addictions? 16, What resources are available for a person suffering from addiction? Question #5 revised to: 5, what are some types of environments that lead to addictions?]

Some questions were redundant and misleading so we wanted clear relevant questions for beginning the learning team with a purposeful theme/topic for the hexagon event so we pray these changes are suitable and more effective.

Surely the atmosphere and environment of gathering the team together was also an important factor. In preparing to alleviate fears and apprehension that the team may have about the commitment to the hexagon question before they met together; I sent out two invitational letters asking members to join me as a team on two dates: July 31, 2004 and August 5, 2004, for a title meeting called, ‘Hexagon Our Creative Imaginations’. The use of invitations was creative and inviting that raised excitement with some of the people, and their expectations. Our first meeting was warm, fun, productive, intimate, and informative. I discovered that each of the ten members has suffered from some type of addictions or had a family member affected by addictions and drug abuse. The team’s dialogue was effective and creative. The intimate setting of a small group led to open discussions. It confirmed how relevant, serious, and personal this topic of the project reinforced the significance of the work in the addictions ministry. We spent time in relationship building, creating good space, and sharing the vision to help focus on the question. The team engaged in learning, dialogue, and hexagoning without difficulty.

There were no right or wrong answers in the group’s work. The power of praying and asking for God’s guidance to assist in guiding the team meeting was perhaps critical. The effective involvement of the learning team clearly became an important part of the report. Their input into the project is one of gratitude for their efforts on this dynamic complex issue in the church, in our city, and community. All of the members of the team had never done ‘hexagoning’ before. The learning team groups were members of Mt. Moriah Baptist Church and students of my bible study group at the church. It was important at the time to respect their anonymity during the project. The atmosphere for

the focus group where the team met was inviting, home-like, informal, and yet formal. The living room in my home was turned into a spacious working area with plenty of room to stand, sit, and move about in an open space. This promoted healthy and comfortable sharing of ideas on addictions and drug abuse, allowing an excellent sharing of intimacy, family, and dialogue. Also, the learning team was diverse in backgrounds, gender, race, culture, and spirituality.

With any complex issue or taboo subject, particularly addictions, we talk, real talk, deep feelings and thoughts surfaced at the meetings surrounding the subject of addictions because it's about real life and real people. Addictions and the affects of addictions when communication begins cause awkward feelings and emotions. Some feelings or truths about addictions are uninviting, threatening yet interesting, and many people are discouraged from being honest and talking truth about what's really going on around addictions and drug abuse in their own lives. Other issues that came up in the discussion were talk on sex, abandonment, personal testimony and dealings within families of active addictions, and feelings of shame, anxiety, and excitement. For addictive people, addiction is a cry to belong and be accepted. It has its root in shame and guilt and feelings of inferiority-superiority complex. Addictions is a taboo subject that many find uncomfortable and unsafe to talk about out of many fears or feelings that exist when speaking about addictions and drug abuse in a group of strangers or in casual dialogue. The learning team gave invaluable and incredible insights in their work on this project. The team was very unified, cooperative, interested, and focused on the pose ministry question throughout the process.

The purpose of this investigative and analysis report is to examine, survey, and observe the current and potentially future missions to the ministry of those who suffer from addictions. To evaluate why healing in the body of Christ, (the church), for those individuals who seem exempt from the local church Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, but our city is bombarded with addictive people, drug abuse, and addictions. One aspect of presenting, analyzing, and developing a ministry dealing with drug addictions and other addictions is the lack of education, and knowledge about Addictions. Overall, the learning team provided exemplary work, as you will learn in this part of the thesis project. In the initial categorization of variables, we came up with 50 hexagons to extract as factors in the hexagon comments. The various attachments, and interrelated variables of the diagrams of systemic dynamics, systems thinking, and the complex dynamics involved in the development of an effective addictions ministry proposed at Mt. Moriah Baptist Church is analyzed in the information gathered in the project.

The learning team provided candid discussion and exciting dialogue about an addictions ministry at MMBC. We learned the project was embarking on something bigger than we proposed in the thesis project. Each group member was given a small survey about their names, ages, gender, children, which they filled out briefly and were welcomed by opening up with prayer, introduction of each other, briefing on the hexagon exercise and its purposes, and we all read biblical passages pertaining to the scope of the addictions ministry project. Creating an atmosphere of acceptance and a warm-friendly environment helps communication to be intimate and open among small groups.

When Paul wrote about the nature of the church in Ephesians, he was intimate describing the “body of Christ” (Ephesians 1:22-23). Just as Christ nurtured His disciples

while He was on earth, so Christ's body, the church, was to make His disciples after Pentecost. The church, then, is key to fulfilling the Great Commission and helping believers to grow in spiritual maturity and development. One might presume the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) was directed to the eleven apostles rather than to the church. "The word disciple comes from the Greek word *mathetes* meaning learner, pupil, follower, or apprentice. This same Greek root is used for *math*, meaning, "to learn". Thus, the process of how we learn or how we become like another person is at the very heart of the process of becoming a disciple."²¹⁷ After all, the church was not even established when the challenge to 'make disciples of all nations' was given. In Acts 1:4, however, just before they were given this instruction they were told not to do anything until the Holy Spirit came upon them. The primary success factor for the Great Commission in the early church was the Holy Spirit (John 14-16)."²¹⁸

The examination of how the local church can plan and house an effective addictions ministry to those who suffer from drug abuse, substance abuse, and addictions is evident in our urban communities. It is the removing of the veil of sin that divides an addict from God, His Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer, Healer, Liberator, and Wonderful Counselor, Savior, Jesus Christ. In our investigation of the 'Veil', the Veil has isolated, blinded, and condemned the addict from the safety of others, especially family and friends. Further dialogue and explanations on how former addicts can be set free from their addictions and experience wholeness in physical, mental, and spiritual terms, and how we can help partner with them and the local church to foster productive membership of the church, of the society, and most importantly of themselves and their family, and

²¹⁷ Newton, Gary. *Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity*, p. 15.

²¹⁸ Newton, pp. 22-23.

eventually become disciples of Jesus Christ. Two meetings were held with a team of (10) members using the hexagon technique.

Some factors included in the project are: 1) they were all of a diverse backgrounds, people of color, different socioeconomic status and gender. Some were Christians and churchgoers. Most were members of Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in Brockton, MA. (Two out of the Ten did not attend church regularly). 2) All of the first team meetings were committed, and volunteered to participate in the second meeting of the hexagon process. 3) All of the learning team was excited, and willing to dialogue on addictions in areas of the community of Brockton, drug addicts, urban community, and the role of MMBC helping serve addicts, and an addictions ministry. 3) We analyzed and discussed systems and existing ministries at MMBC to examine implementation of an addictions ministry and what it would look like in the church. 4) Each one took turns communicating openly about personal areas of contact with addictions, their understanding of addictions, and how the church can play a role in spiritual healing and restoration to people who suffer from addictions and drug addictions. 5) Lastly, comments and remarks were used to enhance intimacy and sharing our own personal experiences of my husband and myself were relevant to the discussion.

We saw how the team was from a diversified spiritual journey, new and seasoned Christians, and some from different geographical locations were a great asset to here differing perspectives on the issue of addictions. As we hexagon the factors and built a new community of a learning team the interest of the project proposal was exciting for some and some members we felt were a little uncomfortable in some of the discussion on this taboo subject because as one person said, 'they never talked about the issue of

addiction to anyone and how it has affected their own personal lives' which was uncomfortable to talk about it. The woman was eager and willing to talk just did not know how to talk on the issue that had affected her personally. All of the team members stressed the importance of having an addictions ministry for all could relate in some manner to the problem of addictions. The team applauded the ministry implications and topic. I was encouraged even though one of the members became very negative and self-righteous about the discussion of addiction particularly drug addiction, which we considered, counter-productive to the process but a welcomed factor in the learning team. Negative feedback is not bad—it is a source of learning.

THE HEXAGON EVENT QUESTION

The question posed to the learning team focus group was: "How can the church play a vital role in ministry ministering spiritual healing and recovery to people who suffer from drug addictions and other addictions in the 21st century?" Once the team began to practice writing the hexagon statements, a young black woman (a new member of the MMBC) volunteered to take the lead as a team leader with no opposition from other team members. A very shy person decided to take the lead and write down the groups responses to the question posed to the hexagoning process team. It was amazing that this lady is usually one of the quietest persons in the church and she was quiet in my bible class who took a leading role in the hexagoning process. Yet, she was enthusiastic and eager to learn. The team was focused and enthusiastic during the hexagon exercise. This was a very encouraging moment for me and the other members of the team. The team began listing all positive reinforcements on the hexagon sheets onto a white poster

board on the wall in my living room. The factors pertaining to the posed question were innovative, insightful, and well done by the team. All of the team's comments were eagerly considered and placed onto the poster boards. At the initial meeting, the team sailed smoothly through listing the positive factors to the question. (See Table 2)

TABLE 2

Table 2. HEXAGON RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: "HOW CAN THE CHURCH PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN MINISTRY/MINISTERING SPIRITUAL HEALING AND RECOVERY TO PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM DRUG ADDICTIONS AND OTHER ADDICTIONS IN THE 21st CENTURY?"

1. Giving Outreach & Creating
2. Volunteers
3. Utilize special speakers and testimony services
4. Using community- organizations to help inform and equip the church
5. Use an on-call hotline (12 step intervention and prayer)
6. Train the church in addictions
7. Teaching & Preaching w/outside Pastors who have had the experience, relevancy
8. Role Play sketches about addictions
9. Awareness of Public through public announcements on what's going on
10. Outpatient Counseling
11. Commitment of Time
12. Information, Materials for specific purposes of conveying knowledge
13. Educational workshops in addictions
14. Education of our children, home, school, and church
15. Employment training/self-motivating program
16. Leaders from the church attend addiction meetings
17. Providing a basic Group/Individual Health Plan
18. Providing shelter/housing program
19. Develop a honor system/Honorary Day
20. Celebrate and recognize individual success
21. Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, Biosocial Screening
22. Holding outreach and gospel concerts
23. Utilize special speakers and testimony services
24. Give love and Share love
25. Maintaining and keeping church functions consistent w/ a goal of informal fellowship

26. Communication of needs told by the person with addictions
27. Accountability
28. Family and Group Therapy
29. Support Therapy - emotional, bio-social, physical, spiritual, psychological, maturity
30. Follow Up/Courtesy Calls

But when it came time to write the hexagons concerning the negative aspects and hindrances to the same question, there was some difficulties in how to write out hexagons negative factors, for these were lengthy phrases and some of them needed to be narrowed down, focused, and formatted to the hexagon sheets. The team finished the task with great perseverance and commitment to finish the negative factors of the hexagon process.

(See Table 3)

TABLE 3

Table 3. HEXAGON RESPONSES TO QUESTION: 'WHAT ARE THE HINDRANCES TO CHURCH PLAYING A ROLE IN MINISTERING SPIRITUAL HEALING AND RECOVERY TO PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM DRUG ADDICTIONS AND OTHER ADDICTIONS IN THE 21st CENTURY?'"

31. Not respecting the opinions of others
32. Not committed and no passion toward the cause and solution
33. Indifference to other people's problems and addictions
34. No patience or understanding to addictions
35. Being blind to addiction or addictive situations
36. Influences in the environment
37. Lack of Resources
38. Lack of Pastoral support in the church family
39. No support group
40. People pleasing
41. Controlling people
42. Trust issues involving too silent about the issue (don't want to talk about the problems of addictions or issues surrounding addictions)
43. No family or church support
44. Disorder and unorganized church structure
45. Lack of cooperation from the church
46. Issues within the church - not being transparent
47. Not sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit
48. Not allowed to operate in their gifts through Leadership and in the church
49. Denial
50. Admitting your mistakes
51. Ignorance/Selfish motives and uncaring toward others
52. Not listening to the people's needs in the church body
53. No communication or unity

The team began to own the material and this was a wonderful observation during the process. I established in the beginning at the first meeting that I wanted each person to participate. The courage and the value of each voice on the team by each person were not withheld. This enabled significant value to what each member spoke in the group, providing a rich experience, a relaxed environment, a feel at-home experience, include enthusiastic team participation. A safe community and an open-transparent discussion on addictions is what I strived for in the hexagon exercise. The team waited patiently taking turns and affirming other team members. I was not involved in the process but happily watched and observed the teams work. I observed various small group dynamics taking place amongst the team that were insightful in my thinking process. All of these components we viewed were key in our ministry plans to those suffering from addictions. It was a natural course of actions to do the Bible (Truth) and reflect upon what God and His Sacred Word has to say about this problem in our city, in our communities, and in our world

In the initial categorization of the variables, we counted a total of 53 hexagon factors. We used 50 hexagons for various reasons and the reflection of the biblical significance of the numbers (50) seemed adequate for the project. Later, I found the task of creating a diagram with the reinforcing loops that the team looped was difficult in its process. The challenge was to learn from each phase of the process good or bad. Everything seemed to be relating to everything, whether it is positive or negative, and all items were relating one to another. There was a sense of peace and joy as we finished the task of looping into categories (**SEE TABLES 4 AND 5**) but at the same time there was no

reference to how all this information was to be translated so we reflected and meditated on the information for weeks. There were many interrelationships among the categories and the 50 hexagons.

Table 4. HEXAGON CLUSTERS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: "HOW CAN THE CHURCH PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN MINISTRY/MINISTERING SPIRITUAL HEALING AND RECOVERY TO PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM DRUG ADDICTIONS AND OTHER ADDICTIONS IN THE 21st CENTURY?"

A. Strategies for Biblical Counseling and Community Evangelization	D. Service Basic Living Needs
01-Giving Outreach and Creating Spirituality	39-Providing a basic Group/Individual Health Plan
04-Outpatient counseling (individually)	8-Shelter/Housing Program
10-Teaching & Preaching w/outside Pastors who have had the experience	
48-Fellowship Partner	
38-Using Community Organizations to help inform/train the church	
31-Give Love and Share Love	
02-Use an On-call hot line (12 step intervention and prayer)	
24-Hand outs of materials to people for information purposes	
B. Tapping Into Your Resources	E. Celebrating Success Stories
36- Making public announcements about what's going on	22-Honor System/Honorary Day of celebration and recognition
03-Asking people to volunteer in the church	
32-Commitment of Time	
C. Leadership Development in Intervention and Addiction	F. Do Intake To Assess Needs
24-Hand outs of materials to people for information purposes	06-Physical/Emotional and Biosocial Screening
23-Leaders from the church should be attending meetings for understanding about addictions	43-Needs told by the person w/addiction
25-Educating our children from home, school, and church	
09-Employment Training self-motivating program	
04-Educational workshops in addictions	
	G. Safely Educate Church about Addiction and Recovery
	33-Role Play sketches about addictions
	37-Holding Outreach/Gospel Concerts
	47-Special speakers/personal testimonies
	49-Church functions w/a goal of keeping people there for informal fellowship
	H. Activate an Accountability Plan to become My Brother's & Sister's Keeper Towards Healing
	07-Family/Group Therapy
	42-Accountability
	41-Follow Up/Courtesy Calls
	50-Support Therapy-emotional, physical, spiritual, psychological, maturity, vocational
	P. Admitting Mistakes

Table 5. "What are the hindrances for the church in playing a vital role in ministering to people who suffer from addictions and obtaining spiritual healing and recovery in the 21st century?"

I. Not Discerning Negative/Inner Voice Confessions	N. Dysfunction in the Body
40-Denial	21-Disorder and unorganized church structure
J. Ignoring the Problem	11-Lack of cooperation from the church
20-Not listening to the people's needs in the church body	14-issues within the church
30-Ignoring the issue of addiction	19-Not allowed to operate in their gifts through Leadership and in the church
17-No communication or unity	18-Not sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit
K. 12-Lack of Resources	O. Lack of Pastoral support in the church family
L. Indifference to others peoples problems and addictions	25-No support group
13-Not committed and no passion to the cause and solution	28-No family or church support
27-No patience or understanding to addictions	
14-Not respecting the opinions of others	
45-Ignorance/selfish motives and uncaring toward others	
M. Avoidance facing the real problems and situations that hinder healing	
29-Being blind to addiction or addictive situations	
16-Indifference and too silent about issue (don't want to talk about the problems of addictions)	
34-Controlling People	
35-People pleasing	
44-Influences in the environment	

For clarity we revised some factors to help us think systemically about the ministry question posed so we edited some of the categories and their corresponding variables, and put them into three simple causal loop diagrams. (See Illustrations 1, 2, and 3).

ILLUSTRATION I

DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH TO PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN RESTORATIVE AND REDEMPTIVE HEALING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

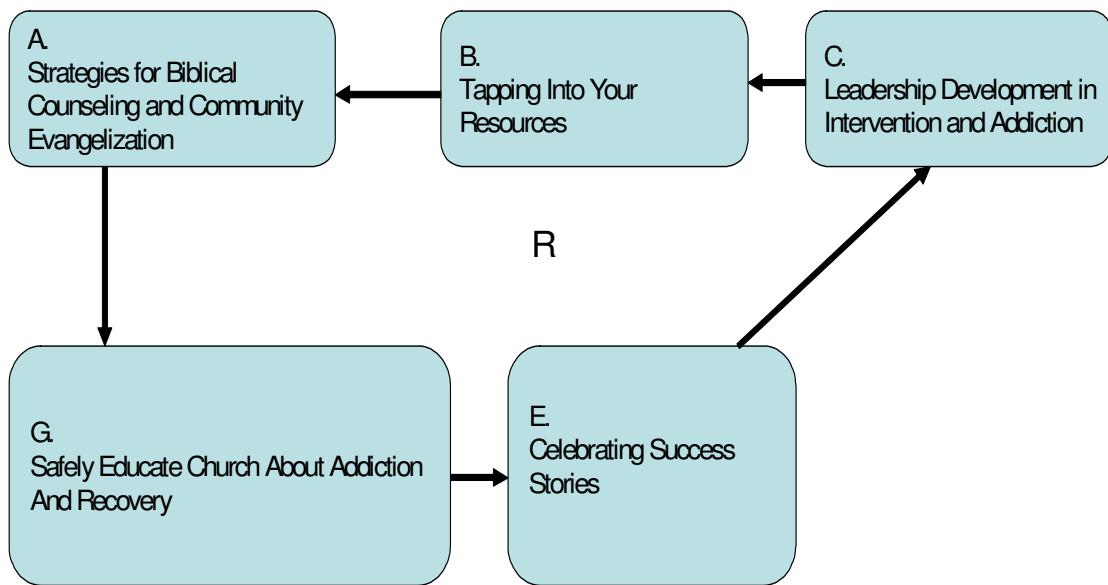


ILLUSTRATION II

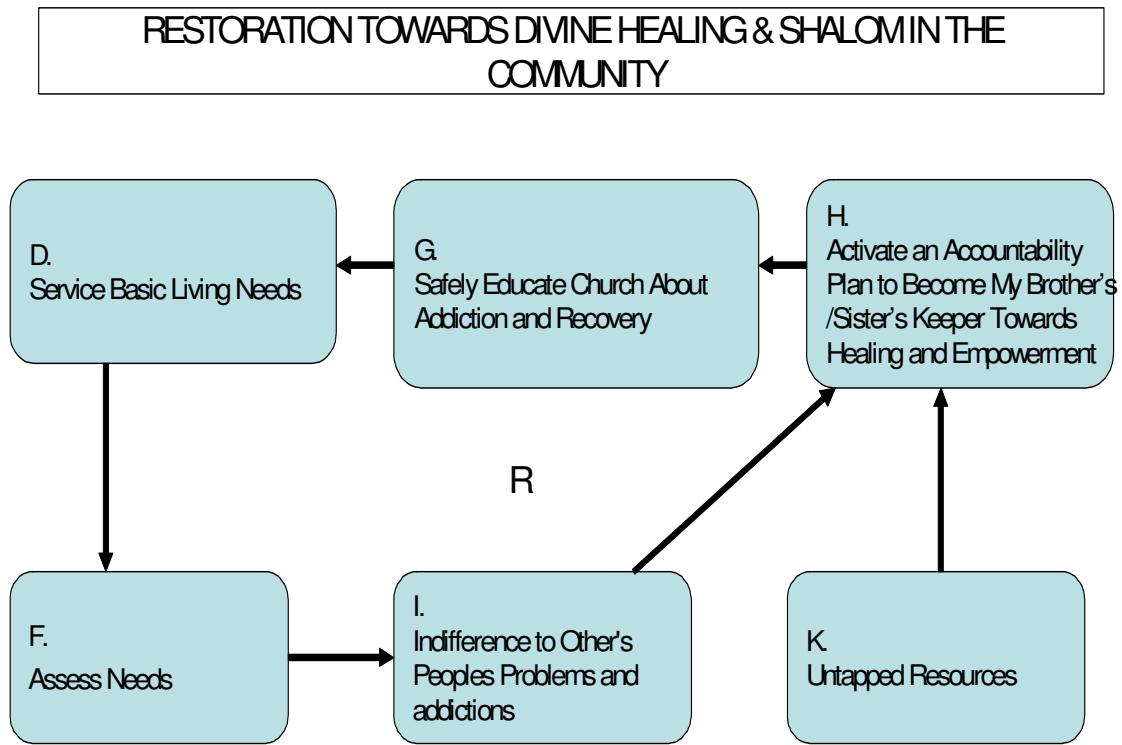
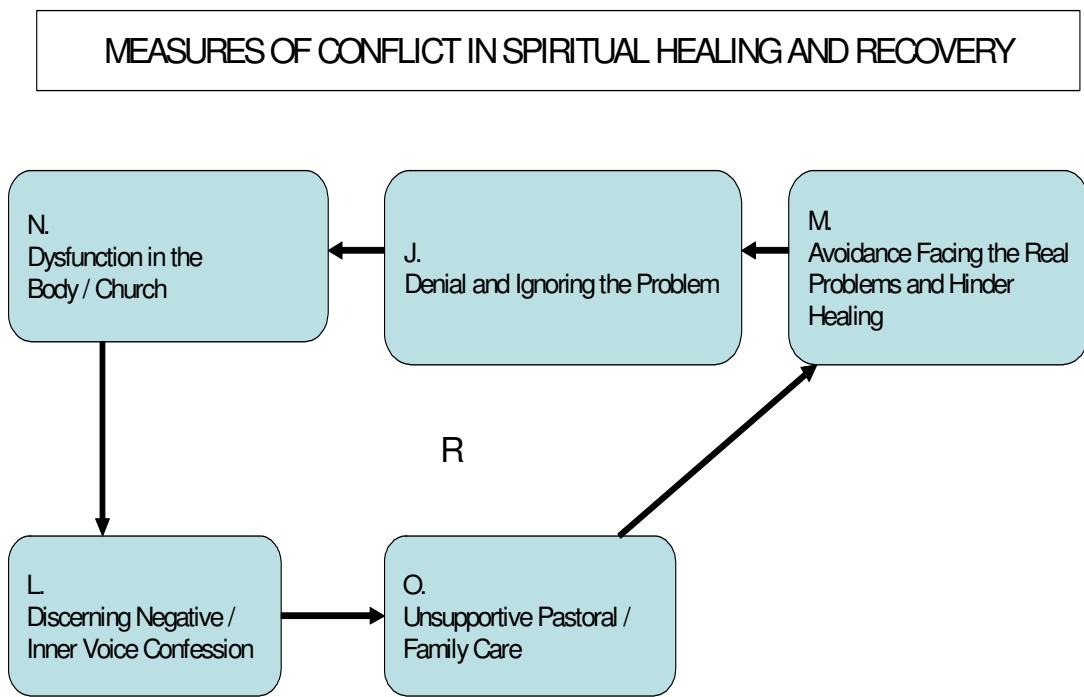


ILLUSTRATION III



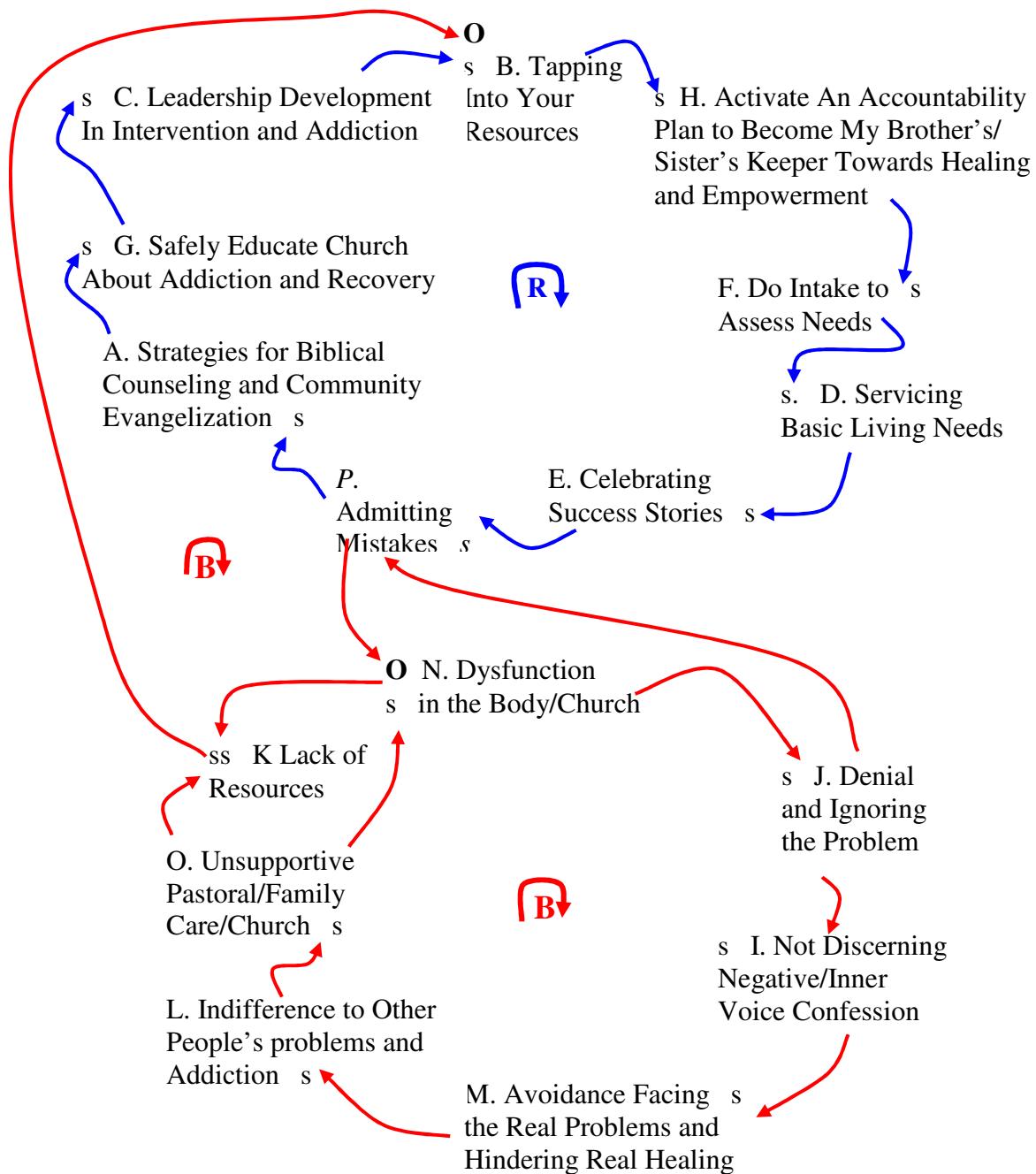
The challenge came in the form of citing so many scriptures and looking to Jesus as the example of how He is the Healer, and He himself initiated the healing and transformation of the community. From a systems perspective, all of the causal loops in Illustrations 1, 2, and 3 are related; however we discovered that the barrier of the dysfunctional church body is counterproductive and hinders any progress of growth in doing systems thinking.

Thus, we put the three simple loops into one causal loop diagram, entitled:

**Comprehensive Development of How the Church Can Play A Vital Role in
Ministry of Spiritual Healing and Recovery to People Who Suffer from Drug
Addiction and Other Addictions in the 21st Century.** (See Illustration IV, p. 154.)

ILLUSTRATION IV: INITIAL CAUSAL LOOP

HOW THE CHURCH CAN PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN SPIRITUAL HEALING & RECOVERY TO PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM ADDICTIONS?



Discipleship is a way of life. We know discipleship calls us to serve others. To become a disciple of Jesus Christ we must become loyal followers of Jesus. It calls for a mother or a father to get up in the middle of the night to care for a sick child. It calls for a mother or father to help her daughter or son who is a heroine junkie to be there for them “no matter what”, in sweats, in jail time, in intervention, or times when they are missing for nights and days on the city streets, rural highways, looking for a ‘fix’ or the ‘drug’ in the battle of their addictions and very lives. It calls a physician to make efforts to relax a nervous patient before an operation, or a clerk to help an elderly person with her grocery bags. This is a critical time to reflect on discipleship; a moment in history when all of us Christian might examine just how faithfully we have responded to the Lord’s call of repentance, faith, and service to others. Jesus’ teaching especially in his parables turned the world and the church upside down. When has your world and our world been turned upside down for Christ’s sake? How do you respond to surprises or miracles? When has someone asked you to “get out of the boat” and do something uncharacteristic or which required risk on your behalf? What did you do?

INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS FOR MMBC ADDICTIONS MINISTRY

In our hexagoning process, we learned about leverage points in healing and redemption for those suffering from addictions. These are some of the positive factors in our addictions ministry hexagon.

- A. Empowerment, discipleship, and healing fosters spiritual development in learning about an individual's spiritual gifts, and how to maximize their God given potential and gifts to live a victorious life.
- B. Commitment of time and volunteerism is invaluable in the recovery process. We use various resources to do ministry in the community or church.
- C. Addictions and Education in biblical study and addictions is needed for effective training for leaders to educate the church and community about addictions through workshops, sermons, testimonies, and develop a center of hope in the community.
- D. The center can establish seminars, leadership training, education, biblical counseling training, basic life skills, and residency programs.
- E. In an addictions ministry the celebration of success stories and successful completion of courses, seminars, trainings, and cases of success of overcoming addictions needs to be awarded by establishing awards ceremony, honor systems.
- F. Each individual case of persons seeking help, healing, and freedom needs case workers, counselors, planning and implementing assessment of need.

G. Conferences, sermons, education can safely educate and inform about the problem of addictions and drug abuse and the process of recovery.

The ministry must utilize a plan of accountability in finances, resources, networks, partnerships, and individuals are all involved in fellowship through worship, concerts, workshops, guest speakers, professionals, illustrative sermons, and web sites.

H. Family therapy and small group therapy is an accountability plan involving the use of mentors for men and women, youth, etc who suffer from addictions and a special group assigned to become my brother's or sister's keeper in the accountability approach to provide guidance in the process of spiritual development and recovery.

P. Admitting Mistakes on the causal loop we learned the following: It is a way of continual learning in addictions ministry. Denial (J) in the causal loop makes us not admit mistakes.

The Following Are Negative Elements In The Diagram:

What then are some of the negative hindrances to an effective addictions ministry in our communities or church?

I. An inability to be honest, transparent, and confess one's own mistakes or addictions creating the progressive state of denial. The lack of discernment on the part of biblical understanding of the problem of addictions.

J. No communication and ignoring the issue of addictions cause severe consequences and lead to no intervention and silence the problem.

- K. A lack of resources.
- L. An indifference to the issue of addictions, drug abuse, and ignoring the problem.
- M. Avoidance of facing the issue of one's own fallen ness, sins, and dealing with the reality of life's issues including addictions and those issues of the flesh, the world, and the devil.
- N. A lack of order and unorganized church structure fueling a dysfunctional church body hindering transparency, gifts of the members, agape love, and insensitivity to the Holy Spirit.
- O. A lack of family and/or church support.

Those of us who have had the privilege of being involved in a healing community can feel the safety, the security, and thus feel empowered to talk about the issues involved in our every day lives. Some of these issues have lain dormant in our hearts, our souls, and our minds for years. The facilitator and Minister had firsthand knowledge and experience to a small group dynamic, a compassion for all in the learning community, and a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Looking inside a healing community and its leverage points for ministering healing and recovery in the church to those suffering from drug addictions and other addictions that MMBc could include are the following observations:

1. We shared an understanding of which Jesus Christ is, we reflected upon God's Word made flesh, and meditated being persuaded to be doers of the Word of God not just hearers of the Word of God.

We acknowledge our fallen ness and were sometimes confronted in love in our community of correction and gained new information and perspectives on what is contrary to the Will of God in our own individual cases. Many had similar experiences, emotions, mental models, and problems where communication was transparent allowing the healing process to take place so we prayed the Prayer of Faith.

2. Creating and allowing the community to be led by the Spirit of God giving all of us the ability to trust, risk, love, learn, laugh, and cry, (very important in expressing our feelings safely), to enhance receiving and giving from one another genuine care. We realize not all people or personalities can surrender to this unconditional love; the ability to trust and receive love is often destroyed due to abuse, abandonment issues, and trauma from early childhood events, misuse and abuse in the church community, that often have kept many wounded and kept secrets for many years.

3. We shared common experiences yet we embraced the diversity of all the individuals in the group. Whether or not their experience is relevant to yours did not matter in the group. We were passionate to feast on the Word of God as if it was our medicine. We shared the vision to know more about God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

4. We became a unified community. We shared the value of individuals and each of us was treated with respect, confidentiality, with care, with love, and we

were embraced for who we are, not what we could become. The simple humble confession of sin before God and each other opens the door of forgiveness, healing, and power for the believer.

5. The sharing of a common goal ‘shared vision’ in the community and on the learning team is applicable to doing this ministry. We all wanted the blessing of God, for a better quality of life, for the pain to go away, a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, salvation, healing, and we wanted to know who we really and what God was saying as members of His family and this learning team.

6. We were able to witness, and invite others seeking recovery (in our community) staying committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and the shared vision in the group. We were accountable to one another to participate, do our part in the group, and volunteer in the community. On the other hand, those in our church did not join our group although they inquired of our progress and quality of biblical counseling and studies.

7. Acknowledgment, affirmation, and tolerance of our perceived strange behavior and lifestyle were paths to freedom in our community.

8. Creating a sharing community provided easy talk about our addictions and other issues associated with the nature of addictions was welcomed for those who wrestled daily in their recovery.

We shared stories of how we were learning to maintain sobriety and to live life on life’s terms with practice, patience, successes, bad times and good times, and as a team.

9. Creating an opportunity to assess each case openly, vocational network, counseling, meeting basic needs, revealed change and God’s Will and Purpose for

our lives being manifested continuing our spiritual growth, healing, and recovery from addictions.

10. Spiritual growth is an inside-outside process and it involves a great deal of suffering on the part of the individual who has committed their will to God's Will for a lifelong process of learning, rigorous honesty, and spiritual development.

In Jesus' Ministry, he was able to develop relationships with sinners without being affected by their ungodly values. His ministry in the world was so radical that the Pharisees criticized Jesus for befriending tax-gatherers and sinners. In the ministry to addictions, the removing of the veil is a way to build up individuals, family, friends, and those one sees as a neighbor on a regular basis. Acts 1:8 declare we are to be Jesus Christ's "witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". Then, What are some of the strategies that the local church (MMBC) can start for effective positive development in healing those people who are hurting trapped, and who are broken in addictions and substance abuse?

1. Seek to develop an intentional bible study relevant to the issues we all face in our daily lives in addictions, substance abuse, alcoholism, obsessive-compulsive behavior, family dysfunctions, and as sinners saved by grace as Christians, and non-Christians, empowering and tearing down the stigmas associated with suffering from an addiction and create a fellowship of community where learning is desired and fosters real communication, healing, and the love of God.
2. Development outreach resources that focuses on a interpretational effort of community agencies that treats and communicates the issue of addictions and

substance abuse in partnership with the church to be a witness of networks in our community.

3. Develop strategies so leadership training can be trained and knowledgeable about addictions and other related issues in addictions to pray and create programs for future effective addictions ministry training for special assignments in the field of ministry to an addictions ministry.

4. Create a database of treatment facilities in the area and train others for volunteer services in a multicultural youth center development/contemporary church facility plan.

Build relationships with community agencies, faith-based programs, media outlets, and hospitals, to better equip professional and spiritual outreach in an addictions ministry.

5. Tapping into resources in the community and continue research about addictions, study and visit effective models in other communities to implement an effective addictions ministry, involving seminars, workshops, worship services, building interpersonal skills and education of the local church.

Other potential hindrances and concerns regarding the implementation of these strategies include:

1. Lack of cooperation and an unorganized, dysfunctional church structure will lead to a quick burnout amongst the leaders and workers in this ministry for their work may overwhelm them if results are not always positive. Safeguarding measures and realistic goals must be implemented so that communication is not stifled and commitment lost.

2. Lack of planning of effective ministries or transparency about the issue of addictions in doing outreach by having an uncaring attitude towards the ministry

and unhealthy mental models that exist by leaders, and lay clergy who have unconfessed sins, an inability to admit one's own mistakes in the body of Christ. The denial of issues of addictions that exist in the body of Christ and in the community creates a lack of unity and concerted efforts for the ministry.

3. Poor ownership of the shared vision to implement strategies and the lack of effective ministry and missions due to a lack of knowledge and an insensitivity to utilize spiritual gifts in the community and in the church for ministry to those hurting, broken, neglected, and suffering from addictions.

4. Guarding against excessive committees, projects, programs, and meetings with Church people who have no time or energy left to develop close relationships with non-Christians fostering a balance in our personal relationships between Christians and non-Christians, learning biblical skills for special assignments, particularly active addictions, which are people who are still caught in the grips of their addictions. Trained biblical specialist who understand ministering and counseling under emergency care situations. This pattern often becomes distorted, confused, and the thrust of evangelism efforts are reversed.

We must be aware that these potential barriers are the very challenges in 1) acknowledging that our organization may have a learning disability and 2) developing a shared vision. Learning disabilities are tragic in children, especially when they go undetected and no treatment plan is implemented in each case. We must guard against such abilities by identifying the seven learning disabilities reported in Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, as 1) I am my Position, 2) The Enemy is out There, 3) The illusions of Taking Charge, 4) The Fixation on Events, 5) The Parable of the Boiled Frog, 6) The Delusion of Learning from Experience, 7) The Myth of the Management Team.²¹⁹

REFLECTIONS ON THE LEARNING TEAM

We are all part of a collective learning team in effective strategy to those suffering from addictions because the learning disability of "The Enemy is out There" is not a complete story. In an addictions ministry it is too easy to make it a moral issue. I learned

²¹⁹ Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline*. (New York: Doubleday, 1990) pp. 17-25.

that where there is failure or disappointment; someone or something needs to be blamed. So we blame an individual, and other things that really are not the main problem that caused the failure we can blame the problem on. Most people pursue rational black and white answers to come up with decisions for blaming others. Senge wrote, “In most companies that fail, there is an abundant evidence in advance that the firm is in trouble. This evidence goes unheeded, however, even when individual managers are aware of it. The organization as a whole cannot recognize impending threats, understand the implication of those threats, or come up with alternatives.”²²⁰

We must become adept learners in our addictions ministry. Mr. Senge writes an illustrative picture of the following story of a friend who is a baseball coach, which is applicable to any organization.

“A boy he coached in Little League who after dropping three fly balls in right field, threw down his glove and marched into the dugout. “No one can catch a ball in that darn field,” he said. There is in each of us a propensity to find someone or something outside ourselves to blame when things go wrong. Some organizations elevate this propensity to a commandment: “Thou shalt always find an external agent to blame”, “Manufacturing blames engineering, and Engineering blames marketing.”²²¹

In like manner, Adam told God he blamed his companion, Eve. Eve blamed the Devil. God convicted them that all were responsible players in the schemes of things in the Garden of Eden. The covenant and the Will of God were broken, disobeyed, and the sin factor is a learning experience and a truth of the matter. In family systems and the addictive cycle involving many interrelated systems the blame-game is highly used as a scapegoat for accepting responsibility for effective and healthier actions.

From Senge’s works, he says:

²²⁰ Senge, p. 17.

²²¹ Ibid, 19.

*“All too often, ‘proactiveness’ is reactivity in disguise. If we simply become more aggressive fighting the ‘enemy out there’, we are reacting—regardless of what we call it. True proactiveness comes from seeing how we contribute to our own problems.”*²²²

“This syndrome is a by-product of “I am my position” and the nonsystemic ways of looking at the world it fosters. When we focus only on our position, we do not see how our own actions extend beyond the boundary of that position. When those actions have consequences that come back to hurt us, we misperceive these new problems as externally caused.”²²³

Similarly, in our addictions ministry as Senge says, “learning to see slow, gradual processes requires slowing down our frenetic pace and paying attention to the subtle as well as the dramatic. If you sit and look into a tide pool, initially you won’t see much of anything going on. However, if you watch long enough, after about ten minutes the tide pool will suddenly come to life. The world of beautiful creatures is always there, but moving a bit too slowly to be seen at first. The problem is our minds are so locked in one frequency, it’s as if we can only see at 78 rpm; we can’t see anything at 3 1/3.”²²⁴

In an addictions ministry, we realize that spiritual development and growth is a process. The learning process is a lifetime process to develop maturely and qualitative time must be spent in God’s Word, God’s Presence, and seek His divine Will for our lives. This must be done in small steps, ‘one day at a time’, and gradually which may seem to pose the greatest threat to intervention and recovery. There are no quick fix solutions and overnight success stories. Leaders and biblical counselors who do this ministry can embrace “gradual processes that often pose the greatest threats by the

²²² Ibid, 21.

²²³ Senge, p. 19.

²²⁴ Ibid, p. 23.

greatest commitment of time and needs.”²²⁵ This is another leverage point learned in the hexagon event and in our causal loop applicable to the ministry.

In a dysfunctional church, we discovered perhaps we are all dysfunctional people, but God’s creations are welcomed into the church just as we are. We all come to God’s house for all different reasons, suffering from various maladies, not knowing we are addicted, victims of various world systems, or victims of addictions. In other words, many people are unable to admit how bad we really are before we came to Jesus. The systems of fear and denial are so strong that a real perspective on the condition of mankind is stifled and remains in critical condition. Even after years of hearing God’s Word, attending worship services, and fellowshipping with other believers, people do church business “works”, attend church on Sunday as usual, and no real healing has taken place in the lives of the very people who need an encounter with God, Our Redeemer and Our Healer. How many times have you seen people go to church who adorn themselves with the finest clothes, dresses, suits, and sweet weaved-words in worship, only to find themselves leaving the service the same way they came into God’s worship service, or worse?

Many people we minister to in the world and particularly in the church are hurt, angry, ex-alcoholics, bitter, unforgiving, liars, manipulators, doubtful, full of resentments, ex-liars, ex-prostitutes, ex-drug addicts, alcoholics, and many are still active in these forbidden habits, addictions, and lifestyles. They’re unchanged in their behaviors or thinking patterns, unable to communicate to real life issues or problems that we all face, for holding onto masks that hide who we really are and what is really going on in our lives as saints or non-saints. Not only is this counterproductive to the ministry,

²²⁵ Ibid, pp. 20-21.

but the traditions and the hierarchy of the church bring disorder, keep people in bondage and a victim mentality, and what emerges is an unorganized church structure involved in works, involved in who gets the credit, who gets the position, and therefore fosters the learning disabilities that Senge talks about in his book.

In Senge's candid language, he writes:

"All too often, teams in business tend to spend their time fighting for turf, avoiding anything that will make them look bad personally, and pretending that everyone is behind the team's collective strategy—maintaining the appearance of a cohesive team. 'The management team', if there is a disagreement, it's usually expressed in a manner that lays blame, polarizes opinion, and fails to reveal the underlying differences in assumptions and experience in a way that the team as a whole could learn."²²⁶

"Most management teams break down under pressure," writes Harvard's Chris Argyris—longtime student of learning in management teams. Senge believes, "the same learning disabilities persist, along with their consequences. The five disciplines of the learning organization can, I believe, act as antidotes to these learning disabilities. But first, we must see the disabilities more clearly—for they are often lost amid the bluster of day-to-day events."²²⁷

Leadership was evaluated at MMBC who appear to be very cold, biased, prejudice, not representing the body it services or sensitive to the needs of the body and city dwellers. This may be harsh criticism, but there is so much more work to do in the ministry observations. MMBC is a predominant African American church with a large number of parishioners being black women and most all leadership is predominantly black males. Can real effective change occur in the Brockton communities? Can real communication occur within these relationships as we engage in honest talk about addictions? If a parent has a child suffering from addiction, a teenager or adult child, will

²²⁶ Senge, p. 24.

²²⁷ Ibid, pp. 25-26.

she or he be able to get justice and help from her local church to gain the assurance, trust, and confidence if we are the leaders God has led us to be, find hope.

Our team found the answers to some of these areas to be quite disturbing if not sad, for we recognized there is a lack of unity and sensitivity in ministry to real life issues in the local MMBC church. It takes courage and risks to admit sometimes in community we are hurting and we need healing deep down in our souls. Psychiatrist and Master Author on the subject of addictions, Dr. Gerald May, says in his book on *Addiction and Grace*, in a day when a current category for some is ‘addictive personality’ he broadens the parameters and declares that “we all are addicts, addicts from the womb, born attached to all kinds of things, places, and people, and desires and thoughts. We have been created with an inborn desire for God, a desire that, if turned toward the created instead of the Creator, becomes idolatrous, and in the process develops into an addiction or unhealthy attachment.”²²⁸

The “church” is the system within a larger system, “the World” systems, and these are “demonic” systems. The church is a community where doing systems thinking and redemptive thinking can be continuous occurrences for providing the place of healing, redemptive work, and a safe, places for fostering interpersonal relationships amongst its members. The tools of small groups are a key element in growing and changing toward spiritual healing and maturity. It is a place where real sharing and the love of God can be received and perceived by others. It can be a place of intimacy with God and with others. We learned in our lectures and in my own life that real help occurs when the complex dynamics of interrelationships and community work positively for a person. Any spiritual leader who has the mind of Christ, for His redemptive work on the

²²⁸ Bayley, Robert. Addiction and Grace. Total Health Communications, Inc. Oct. 1989, p 1 of 4.

earth, and who is equipped to minister the love of God to all of humanity, is of significant value. This leader loves regardless of people's race, age, sex, or conditions. A redemptive life and a renewed mind are essential for spiritual development and growth. It is also essential for healing to take place. Biblical counseling establishes a safe environment for people from all walks of life particularly for people who suffer from addictions in this proposed ministry. A safe place allows a person to feel comforted, valued, to recover, to heal, to make healthy choices, and to be reconciled to God.

We observed and discussed leadership roles in the church on this matter. The lack of transparency and sensitivity largely exists in the body of Christ. Many in our church are not led of the Holy Spirit, and are not allowed to operate in their gifts; therefore people remained stagnant and unchanged. Many are stifled in their spiritual growth and people are ignorant about who God is and about their purpose in God. The bible says, 'oil' flows from the top down and if leadership is not working towards freedom in God and practicing redemptive thinking for healing in the body of Christ, many people will hide behind masks, games of manipulation, and pretend everything is okay, when it is not okay. This lack of sensitivity and support of an addictions ministry in the church impedes progress of people being set free from their addictions.

The result of such disunity and ignorance to share about real life issues are hidden agendas, mental models, and distrust among the members. The church can continue to implement church programs but they are not effective ministries to move the body to its ordained place in God. It only makes "bumpy rugs" where one walks on top of serious issues and ignores the realities of the facts. Here no one is getting real help and

transformation they need met in their lives to continue to service the people of God and God's kingdom.

Leadership and many people in the walls of the church are not aware of the issues surrounding an addict or addictions unless you have experienced the lifestyle for yourself, or you as a minister have had the special assignment in the field of addictions ministry to help assist many lost souls in this area. We discovered that addictions awareness groups or workshops and educational training are necessary for this ministry. This I believe is a real challenge for the body of Christ at MMBC because a dysfunctional church needs gradual love, a safe environment, the love of God for all people, education on the issue of addiction, and biblical counseling. Likewise, many people do not have the knowledge or understanding in redemptive thinking for they do not actively engage in the study of God's Word. Many do not participate in biblical counseling groups or small group relationships building. A person who is willing to change does not realize instantly that redemptive change never occurs on the outside. Nor does spiritual maturity occur on the outside. It begins with an inside change that manifests itself on the outside. We discovered that working towards building relationships is key to remove the superficial level of dealing in relationships. People are afraid to talk about what is really going on, if the church is indifferent to other people's problems and addictions. If there is no compassion or hopelessness, people feel they cannot begin relationship building on an intimate level or personal level because others don't have my best interest at hand but 'self-interest'.

I learned it is necessary to allow God to emerge those leaders who are trained, sensitive, redemptive thinkers, and passionate, particularly about setting the captives free

from addictions. They must have a knowledge of the Word of God to assist them in applying the biblical truths and ethics to create a mission to “doing truth” in the very lives of those addicts. We can help in ministry to remove the negative mental models, triggers of hindrances, barriers to spiritual maturity, to promote a healthy church and a safe environment to help those who are suffering from addictions and secrecy. We realize religion and religious spirits can be hindrances to healing and empowerment for individuals who suffer from addictions.

The causal loop diagram shows planned programs geared to educate the church on addictions and recovery is an element necessary for foundational spiritual development for long-term goals and plans. Some programs may be effective for a season. As times change in the field of addictions and what’s effective in ministry, the church needs to be flexible in fishing and in teaching others how to fish. We must foresee unintended consequences of planning and strategies in addictions where denial and ignoring the problem will exist. The learning disabilities can be counter-productive to recovery and to effective recovery and a new life that addicts can find in Jesus Christ.

When we align our lives to God’s Will and God’s divine plan the returns are multiplied. We observed that plans toward building a healing and healthier community is based on the interrelated relationships of supporting and showing compassion for one another through faith. All Christian learning organizations are defined by ‘community’ and in the community is a ‘shared vision’ and ‘team learning’ that all feel a sense of belonging and a part of the community. This interrelatedness of relationship building determines the favorable outcome of outreach services, and utilizes the gifts and resources that God gives us; thus our attitudes gear us toward serving and living in our

own giftedness and redemptive thinking. Systems' thinking then emerges from our encapsulated community when we seek to be consistent to inter-relational thought conditioning as we work in the broader world of social reality.²²⁹

Here are some added positive unintended outcomes from the hexagon process that have become evident to us:

THE LEARNING TEAM

1. The team was diverse in its background of male and female, two men and eight women, who were from different socioeconomic status and backgrounds, Christian and non-Christian, and the development of communication on the subject of addictions as a ministry was met with much enthusiasm and eager anticipation from the team. It was to this group that I shared how positive results can occur in small groups and that their hard work and input is what a healing community looks like where real growth and understanding can occur as well as relationship building. As we continued to see each other every week I felt a real sense of community emerge among the team. This bonding could create a lifetime of mentoring and fellowship with friends who are compassionate, and who are equipped a little better than where we were before the process to begin an addictions ministry.
2. One woman from the team thought it was not possible to go forth with this type of ministry at this time for we did not have the blessings of the Pastor or leadership. She was concerned that we did not move forward so fast without the proper permission to move forward at our local church. I assured her we were only using this information for research, and perhaps for future plans to start a ministry to serve those who are suffering in the streets, in our homes, in our community, and in our church. We encouraged her input, welcomed her comments, and we are now more equipped because of this process on how to accept comments like this women's which could lead to discouragement and frustration, however it is useful information on how to pray and proceed in the future.
3. The modeling of the Hexagon Process to other members and leaders at MMBc would be beneficial but not plausible at this time. Many members on the team realize how the dysfunction of the church will not allow honest and transparent communication. The church does not deal with real life issues in the sermonic deliveries, or personal testimonies are stifled and not heard, so how could this addictions ministry go forth due to

²²⁹ Halls, Culture of Hope. (Draft), CUME Class notes. Boston, MA. pp. 171-172.

the lack of honesty and pastoral support about dealing with the lack thereof; of real life issues in the leadership of the Church.

4. For the past five years, I have taught in the Adult Christian Education Course, ‘Growing toward Spiritual Maturity’, (I have more students enrolled in my class than the 6 other courses taught for enrichment in biblical studies), and I can attest that open, honest, and transparent communication is non-existent. I am intentional due to my seminarian training to be a model of transparency and deal with the real issues of life and of those in the church. It has been a blessing from what evaluations and comments my students have expressed taking my class.
5. How this process will benefit me in the future is an issue I wrestle with daily. The team was able to see the value of the hexagon process and team learning. All of us were blessed and excited to see a healing community and a group (strangers some of them) that builds a healthy relationship and fosters communication where healing for the addicts in our community and our church with hope for a door to open for this ministry to go forth, because we all realized it’s needed greatly in our community. In our evaluation of the factors from the hexagon process there is a need for a ministry of this kind in the community and to the body of Christ. The doors of the church must begin to allow its leaders and God’s woman or God’s man who have been given special gifts, chosen, called to lead the people out of bondage and set the captives free into the marvelous light. We need trained leaders and more so, we are our brother’s keeper, and we are our sister’s keeper!

Sometimes, Christian work is exactly that, “works” – trying to reform something for exterior sources. We learn it all must begin with the grassroots people, it must be theirs, ownership of the work, it must start from their spiritual yearnings, their visions, their Spirit-led motivations, and to a degree, their resources. The spiritual life flows from within the believer to outward manifestations. Being involved in several therapeutic groups, AA meetings, 12 step programs, small groups, healing communities, and biblical counseling groups, empowered leadership training, God uses biblical principles and His Word to bring forth divine purposes through His Body, the Church. The body of Christ is

empowered and equipped then moves outward to a needy world. But it all must begin with an indigenous group of people. We cannot orchestrate it with ‘our’ resources from the ‘outside’. Christ did not work in this way in his ministry. Jesus was about his father’s business and proclaimed He came to fulfill the Will of God. We should not think we could do otherwise. We discovered these principles at work as unintended positive consequences as the team formed together in the hexagon process.²³⁰

It is our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and Jesus’ examples of compassion to those who are considered outcasts, addictive, wounded, and sick and those who were suffering from all kinds of conditions that we cannot overlook. We must learn to apply the truth, to learn how to catch these fish, then feed the fish, and to empower those fishermen to catch and feed other fish for the kingdom of God. How do we “do truth” in complex urban settings, with complex problems, involving “complex people”? How do we approach a ministry to save and heal those suffering from addictions and substance abuse? Are their systemic and strategic weapons involved in this type of missions and compassion ministry?

It is a privilege to be a child of God. It is the grace of God that we have been called, gifted, and chosen to be a part of a small group and a safe community within the walls of the church. At MMBC I had the opportunity to believe in leadership, the Word of God, the community of “doing truth”, and redemptive thinking. This learning community began with a couple (one man and one woman, and one redemptive thinker) a minister of the gospel that suffered from addictions and various childhood traumas, family dysfunctions, and deep pain. The Minister took us into his life, and poured out the love of Jesus so generously mentoring us as if we were his biological children. The

²³⁰ Dr. Douglas Hall, DMIN Lecture notes. 2nd Residency CUME-Boston, MA. 2004.

minister gave the agape love to this couple. So they received a renewed relationship with God and it was Jesus working through the minister who welcomed us with open arms in spite of our condition and questionable past. We had deep scars and deep wounds. God invited us to the table of a disciple, a minister who believed also in doing truth and redemptive thinking. The Minister did not look for quick fixes to solve our problems. He looked to the Word of God, a societal reentry program (so to speak), that retrained, rehabilitated, and rededicated ourselves to God's Will. The group grew in its numbers by each member bringing a friend or family member. Some came brokenhearted, guilt-ridden, shamed, weary, hopeless, demon-possessed, marital problems, vocational, legal, and financial problems, and those who suffer from all kinds of addictions. We embarked on a new education in holistic healing and empowerment for living. This level of mentoring and commitment was voluntary. For any person to become a whole person in Jesus Christ, they must be in relationship with God. As mentors and ministers, the Bible says these words:

“The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run to it and are safe.”
(Proverbs 18:10). The minister then led us to the God of the Bible and expected us to live for God and do the Word of God. This verse if done means we are safe from all things such as the flesh, the world, and the devil. All things that seek to bring us harm and danger.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS IN EMPOWERING MINISTRY IMPLICATIONS

In the small group, we learned biblical principles that allowed us to be sensitive the moving of the Spirit, and to the needs of each individual who suffered from addictions were discerned on a need to know basis. The ministry and services, of course,

were very effective. The good fruit remains right up to this day. A Pastor and writer once wrote, “Information + Revelation = Transformation”.

Dr. Joe Lombardi, a Christian psychologist and DMin. Professor is quoted in the book, A Culture of Hope, “Healing is nurtured in community”, and he says, “One-on-one therapy only gets the person on track for recovery”. People are ultimately healed in community. There are people who get their healing in a place where they feel like they belong and where someone really cares about them. People whose lives are in shambles from sickness, diseases, and addictions have dozens of related problems, all interrelating in multitudes of ways to feed their dysfunctional behavior. Long-term healing occurs in and through communities especially for those recovering from addictions. “A trained professional can be critical, in some cases, in starting a healing process, but healing matures and endures within the context of a caring community.”²³¹

In the local church there are many people who suffer from addictions and like illnesses that have been placed in hospitals, institutions, jails and prisons. Rehabilitation and spiritual recovery centers will be needed to help them and by those who are a part of the urban church. The challenge is to plan intervention and strategies that welcomes people from all walks of life and backgrounds with a common purpose and vision. Many factors are considered in the implementation of the proposed ministry, which are to mix various methods in a holistic and compassionate ministry. The greatest discovery is the message of love and reconciliation for those who suffer from addictions in this ministry. Those who are offered support and help by the addictions ministry will benefit if there is a team approach plan for them to receive services and grow pursuing the high calling of Jesus Christ and do truth in love. We are called to grow toward spiritual maturity and

²³¹Halls, *Culture of Hope*, p. 128.

become a lifelong learner of Jesus Christ. The bible speaks on the ‘Removing of the Veil’ that is applicable to an ‘Addictions Ministry’ because we have access to God, the Holy of Holies, only through the Blood of Jesus. We are not going to beat people over the head with the Word of God to expect immediate change that will only be another illusion or a quick fix. Many disciples have been taught to fish, and there were times that some caught big fish, small fish, sick fish, pretty fish, and ugly fish. To catch certain kinds of fish, a learned fisherman will use the right bait. In other words, effective ministry will involve a variety of strategies and plans to catch the fish we intend to catch, in the ministry to those who suffered from addictions and substance abuse. In doing an addictions ministry in the local church, we realize some of these fish will be caught from dark, murky waters and deep mud traps. Some will be caught in deep holes and pits. Some may be pulled out of tangled debris and systems. But the power of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit this will have effective long term results in doing the truth in our lives as we seek to apply kingdom principles.

Why would one person or child in fear wish to listen to anyone who only frightens you more and poses threats to your freedom? Fear prevents listening in human relationships and it is no different in a relationship with God. The truths that we must believe and the duties that we must perform must be considered more completely in relation with a living person. Our hexagon diagrams discovered in our narrative that there are barriers of ignorance and a dysfunctional leadership in the church. The Bible says we all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God but do we really believe that for ourselves even after we have had successes and a long term relationship with the Lord. The church is silent about the sufferings for Christ amongst its members and has

not been forthright in telling, preaching, and confirming for others who are suffering how to go through and then overcome when we fall short. Sometimes, the traditions and the hierarchy systems brings more disorder, disunity, lies and corruption, and an unorganized church structure involved more in works, egos, who gets the credit, and it is these learning disabilities and works of the flesh rather than of the Spirit that need to be confessed and acknowledged in the body of Christ, and in our churches. How can you help individuals who are junkies, addicts, and addictive for years and years; and hand them a band aid for a deep wound; and tell them just say “No!” No doubt there are issues and problems that leaders of the church are not privy to be transparent about. But shouldn’t ministers and leaders have a testimony! Leaders must be sensitive to the needs of people, if not, they are not led of the Spirit.

The author Watchmen Nee wrote in his book, *The Release of the Spirit*, said: “Each of us must find out for himself what is the mind of the Lord in his life. It is a most lamentable fact that many do not know what is the mind or intention of the Lord for their lives. How much they need for the Lord to open their eyes, to see that everything that comes into their lives can be meaningful. The Lord has not wasted even one thing. To understand the Lord’s purpose, is to see very clearly that He is aiming at a single objective: the destroying or breaking of the outward man.”²³²

Brother Nee writes, “The Lord wants to break our outward man in order that the inward man may have a way out. When the inward man is released, both unbelievers and Christians will be blessed.”²³³

Interestingly, we do not need each other in order to distinguish those areas of ourselves needing improvement or change nor can we take an honest inventory of ourselves daily. The question of ‘brokenness’ was asked in several circles of recovery

²³² Nee, Watchman. *The Release of the Spirit*. Cloverdale, ID: Sure Foundation, 1965.

²³³ Watchman, *The Release of the Spirit*, p. 11.

and addictions, and in small learning groups at my church. We acknowledge that everyone does not want to change even if it's for the better. Watchman Nee asked the question, "Why is it that after many years of dealing some remain the same? Some individuals have a forceful will; some have strong emotions, others have a strong mind. Since the Lord is able to destroy these, why is it that after many years some are still unchanged? We believe there are two main reasons."²³⁴

"First, many who live in darkness are not seeing the hand of God. While God is working, while God is destroying, they do not recognize it as being from Him. They are devoid of light, seeing only men opposing them. They imagine their environment is just too difficult, that circumstances are to blame. So they continue in darkness and despair. It is not a human hand, nor our family's, nor the brothers' and sisters' in the Church, but God's."²³⁵

"Second, another great hindrance to the work of destroying the outer man is self-love. We must ask God to take away the heart of self-love. As He deals with us in response to our prayer, we should worship and say, "Oh, Lord, if this be Thy hand, let me accept it from my heart." Let us remember that the one reason for all misunderstanding, all fretfulness, all discontent, is that we secretly love ourselves. Thus we plan a way whereby we can deliver ourselves. Many times problems arise due to our seeking a way of escape—an escape from the working of the cross."²³⁶

My only hope and passion is that in the intervention plan of an addictions ministry I propose has these hindrances be addressed immediately. There is a need for biblical counseling to addicts to discover the reasons why we escape from reality and life's

²³⁴ Ibid, p. 15.

²³⁵ Ibid, p. 16.

²³⁶ Watchman, p. 16.

issues. Addicts need to discover who they are, then embrace intimacy in loving themselves and God. Strategic education and understanding of our addictions, and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is an initial phase of doing this ministry. “He who has ascended the cross and refuses to drink the vinegar mingled with gall is the one who knows the Lord. Many go up to the cross rather reluctantly, still thinking of drinking vinegar mingled with gall to alleviate their pains.”²³⁷ There is a balm in Gilead and this water when you drink it will quench any thirst and hunger.

Partnerships and involvement of the lay clergy should be allowed to operate in their gifts enabling them to be their brothers and their sisters’ keeper. The stifling of spiritual freedom and growth in the body of Christ occurs when you have spirits of envy, jealousy, fear, deceit, manipulation, and lies of the enemy. A lack of support by the church and the church family only fosters more hidden agendas, distrust, mental models of ridiculous perceptions, evil practices, as well as disunity among its members. Programs are implemented but they are not effective ministries to individuals who need a Savior or a divine encounter with the presence of God. In a dysfunctional family everyone plays out a certain role in order to survive the fallen ness and pain that it brings. It only makes “bumpy rug”, “silent frustration”, and no one is getting the real help or the balm in Gilead that they need.

“Real help occurs when the complex dynamics of interrelationships and community work positively for a person. We must have unity and a mindset for God and his redemptive work. Our goal and purpose should be kingdom-oriented to assess the needs and train the leaders to be equipped for ministry in urban centers and in our cities. Leaders and lay clergy need to be trained to better understand addictions, the types of

²³⁷ Ibid.

people who suffer and those who have been affected by addictions. A redemptive life and redemptive thinking are essential for growth. We must establish a safe environment for people who suffer from addictions to help reconcile them to God, to restore them to God, and to allow God to heal, to save, to set them free while they have an abundance of hope, grace, and love poured out from believers who truly understand what the Bible says concerning addictions and substance abuse. Jesus taught by example, and His Word. Likewise, we must lead by example and tell the world that the divine revelation is Christ...The beautiful face of Jesus Christ must shine out more clearly in the Church.”²³⁸

So we must be careful to present a living Savior who lives in His servants to fulfill God’s Will that not one will be lost but have eternal life. In the resources of the mystery of Christ, prayer, Bible classes, and fellowship of those who can identify with the struggle of addictions can offer help to those suffering and find meaning for their lives in relation to God. We are our brother’s keeper; we are our sister’s keeper. God sent the prophet Isaiah into the soul-sick world, God asked who would go to the nations on his behalf, and Isaiah responded, here I am, Lord, send me!

“Many discover at Taize that they come to life truly in developing a relationship with God or, as Brother Roger once wrote, that they “find fulfillment only in God’s presence.” What is most personal in people (young, old, or addictive) that the mystery of Christ will bring light to what at times seems so dark and hopeless within them?”²³⁹ Do we have to be sent or can anyone really go on behalf of the cries of the addicts in the suburbs, cities, or even rural areas?

²³⁸ Ecumenism, No. 124, December 1996, Bishop Zoungana from Africa (spoke these words), p. 13.

²³⁹ Ibid, p. 11.

“The village of Taize is nestled in the hills of the Burgundy region of France. The community was established by just one voice. Brother Roger arrived in the village in 1940, a place where war had already cause pain and suffering. He welcomed refugees and sheltered Jews fleeing from the Nazi occupation. To this day, Taize remains a place of hospitality for people of all creeds, all ages, and many nationalities, and all sufferings in life. The word ‘Taize’ has come to mean spiritual gold for many who have attended its services.”²⁴⁰

In this century, does not the Church see its own vital role in the Ministry of Healing, Hope, and Recovery to Drug Addictions or any other addictions? “In a ‘Culture of Hope’, Dr. Douglas Hall and Professor Judy Hall experienced in Boston a remarkable discovery. It always followed a pattern of 1) fallen ness, 2) confession, 3) substitution, and 4) new life. The title of their book, “*A Culture of Hope*” they write, we must experience community, redemption, and a high calling. Some of us in the learning community at MMBG experienced this community of hope in our lives. Some of these recognizable factors include:

- a) Facing the propensity to negative unintended consequences of our actions (fallen ness)
- b) Admitting our mistakes (confession)
- c) Seeking a better substitute for our wrong way of doing things (substitution)
- d) Consistently living according to that new pattern (new life)

²⁴⁰ Payette, Lynn. Taize: Spiritual Gold. The Living Church, April 11, 1999, pp. 14-15.

It is all these concepts that are grounded in Christianity.”²⁴¹

How does the Bible speak to people who are suffering from addictions and these concepts that are the factors for all human kind? Is it not Jesus who freed sinners, Jesus who cast out devils, Jesus who healed the sick, and Jesus who is the center of Christianity? Is not the Church open to all persons who are sick and in need of a Savior, who are in need of divine power, who are in need of healing, food and water, a place where their needs can be met? We can learn much from Jesus of Nazareth.

When we meet Jesus in the Gospels, he is a loving and generous adult who is most willing to give himself to people in need. How did he develop the ability to be able to reach out to so many different kinds of people with such openness, forgiveness, and kindness? When did he discover that with a mere touch or word, God’s healing power would come from him? Both water and resources were in short supply, as in the local church; so one had to learn to share with the neighbors. In such crowded living conditions in the ghetto/city, it was tempting to ignore the weak, the disabled and the elderly, the addicts, who couldn’t work, and to expel the sick and diseased lest contamination spread. There was a time in history that any person who had leprosy or who had been diagnosed with drug abuse, heroine addicts, alcoholism, these people were considered rejects of the polite society and sent away from their homes and families and then placed in insane asylums. These people’s condition considered them cursed and outcasts.²⁴²

²⁴¹ Hall, Dr. Douglas and Judy Hall. *A Culture of Hope* (draft). Submitted as Class Lecture notes, Doctor of Ministry, CUME-Boston, MA 2004.

²⁴² Hill, Brennan. *Jesus, Center of Christianity*. St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, OH, 2000, pp. 53-54.

“Was it this environment that helped Jesus learn that his neighbor was not simply the person next door, but the old woman down the road, who needed food and water, brought to her? Or was the neighbor a leper in the caves outside the village who needed oil for his or her sores and longed for friendship? Or was it the pained-woman bleeding from the abuse and neglect of her personhood to be something for man or her husband that Jesus never created her to become, and now drinks to numb the pain and years of abuse? Perhaps, Jesus learned about table ministry from his mother, Mary, by watching her invite a blind man for a meal, or sharing what little she had with a widow? Was it during these years that Jesus learned to befriend the poorest of the poor and to make outcasts feel welcome and loved?”²⁴³

Furthermore, many people seem to have a list of those they deemed inferior and deserving of rejection. Jesus did not accept these judgments and divisions. For him, each person was a child of God, each a sister and a brother! Jesus invited his followers to call him their friend, and he offered his comfort and assistance to **all. It didn't matter whether it was a leper, a hemorrhaging woman, a blind man, a Samaritan woman or a woman prostitute grievously hexed of devils, nor did the disease of addiction deter Jesus from helping them!** Jesus was prepared to do what he could to bring the healing power of God into their lives!²⁴⁴

What roles and investments into the lives of the outcasts are the Church's participating in other than feeding and clothing the homeless? How can the church play an active role in the Healing of those suffering from addictions of various kinds? WE believers, realize that conversion brings immediate and instantaneous holiness, as the

²⁴³ Ibid, pp. 54-56.

²⁴⁴ Hill, pp. 56-58.

new believer is made perfect in the eyes of God. This has nothing to do with human goodness. It is totally based in Christ's sacrifice on the cross for sins. What scripture records at being saved by grace (Romans 3:22-26; 5:8; 8:1; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Thankfully, God has given us all the resources we need to live a victorious Christian life (2 Peter 1:3) in the person, the power, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, (Ephesians 5:18).²⁴⁵

Paradoxically, in a dysfunctional church, it may take years or even a lifetime for people to acknowledge that something is terribly wrong in this place. People can come to church not knowing they are addicted or been victims of addictions in their families or childhood. Perhaps, most deceiving, is people hide behind their jobs, positions, titles, works, even their church adorned attire wearing the finest clothes, dresses or suits, hair weave and soft flattering words, only to find themselves the victim of despair, trauma, and addictions and as they spiritually develop there is this something pulling them back or hindering the freedom to be free. Many people we find are silent, hurting, lonely, sick, not growing spiritually, not changed, and really unable to cope with the storms of life or the stories of addictions and how they affect us. The celebration of success of those who have overcome addictions and substance abuse is often minimized in our society and the church. It is truly the Word of Testimony that breaks the yokes of bondage(s) and strongholds in our life. We believe building relationships and honoring those who have had successful progress in recovery by establishing an honorees day to enable more to succeed. These success stories should always take front stage recognition. This gives

²⁴⁵ Newton, p. 20.

honor and Glory to God and also empowers others to give them hope, compassion, and love.²⁴⁶

There are some hindrances to what we subscribe as ‘removing the veil’ and addictions ministries plan. What Jesus offered that is relevant to our addictions ministry is liberation for those imprisoned in sinful habits, those whose spirits were impoverished. Liberation theology would say that he attempted to free both the oppressed and oppressors. Jesus prophetically pointed out the judgment that greed, lust, selfishness, lasciouvness, self-righteousness and violence bring upon one’s spirit. Jesus warned corrupt and sinful religious leaders that they must be humble servants of their people

The Master did not mince words as he described some of the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites who did not practice what they preached. Jesus chastises these leaders, who lay heavy burdens upon others and proudly strut in public, demanding the first places at banquets and in the synagogues. He called such leaders blind guides, blind fools and hypocrites, snakes and whitewashed tombs filled with death and filth (Matthew 23:1-37). Jesus called these leaders to repentance as he cried over the city of Jerusalem, wishing that he could gather his people to himself as innocent children. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). How many of us look on things of the outward appearance? We must think again in

²⁴⁶ 1st Residency Doctor of Ministry Class notes and lectures. Boston-CUME: 2004.

addictions ministry. Effective programs of ministry and outreach in education and recovery process must be implemented to make a person whole again unto God.²⁴⁷

“The first step of redemption is an acknowledgment of fallenness.”²⁴⁸ How can those who suffer from addictions feel safe and a sense of belonging to the body of Christ if the people in the body have self-righteousness to their own spiritual conditions and fallen ness? Anyone suffering from addictions has fallen far from the safety and intimate relationship with God. We who have suffered only can identify with the mental state of psychosis, mistrust, confusion, and evil thoughts that pervade our every thinking when one is caught in the grips of an addiction. The fears are the hindrances that keep a person in bondage to the addictions out of fear of abandonment, rejection, even criticism that somehow they are abnormal and outcasts even by the family of God? The negative inner voices that compels the flesh to act in ways that are truly detrimental to the life of those who suffer from addictions is counterproductive to the admittance of an individual’s defeat and grave mistakes while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other addictions. “Acknowledging a propensity to negative unintended consequences or the fallenness of our environment and ourselves, is the first and most rewarding step in redemption”, according to authors Dr. Doug Hall and Judy Hall.”²⁴⁹

It is clear that even in admitting that a person has a problem with addiction is much to celebrate about and one of the most rewarding steps an individual can make. When was the last time you heard of an individual or individuals being celebrated for success in overcoming their addictions in the Church or community? In the medical field of addictions and alcoholism treatment, a key stage is confession; that I need help and

²⁴⁷ Hill, pp. 78-79.

²⁴⁸ Halls, Culture of Hope. (Draft).

²⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 228.

want help for my addictions. If you don't confess; chances of hope turn to hopelessness. Denial keeps the problem hidden, and the game of denial progresses to where a person or a people do not even recognize, never mind admit, to having a problem, or that a problem exists that is counterproductive to redemption. The problem progressively gets worse. Denial is the enemy of this initial stage of a person getting treatment or help for their addiction problem.

Many leaders and believers do not go out beyond the walls of the church, to advance the kingdom of God, and impact the lives of those suffering from addictions. It's a separate culture and entity. There are various levels in the process of becoming addictive. Significant indicators and knowledge of these levels of diagnosing a person who is in bondage or an addictive cycle is not general or common information. From extremely horrible behavior to strange-psychotic behaviors, even to subtle lies and denial, it is difficult to confess, to comprehend, or minister to addicts in some of these stages. Many other signposts and triggers of addiction occur in the various progressive stages of addictions. These stages are very difficult to encounter, recognize, and minister to, if we are not aware, educated, and trained in these behavioral factors and spiritual matters concerning addictions. The addictive life is vicious cycle, one that is extremely difficult to break free from. At times it seems hopeless and impossible.²⁵⁰

We are compelled to get real answers to real life problems that we are facing in the 21st century. Many lives will be touched, changed, and empowered by the powerful truth of God's Words. To look to Jesus for the answers is to also look to the sons of God, divine messengers, who have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior. We will be empowered to help those who suffer from addictions to a new life

²⁵⁰ Halls, 1st Residency DMIN: Class notes, selections from Narcotics Anonymous Book.

and a changed mind, to help remove the veils that so hinder so many from receiving Jesus Christ as Lord. We also want to be an example of Jesus Christ and a disciple of Jesus Christ to help others walk and live in the new way of life. So there in our “high callings where people are fallen, dysfunctional, suffering from all kinds of addictions, unable to remove the veil of the flesh; there are two things necessary to be aware of in effective ministry in addictions: one thing is to avoid counter productivity and the second thing is holding onto the culture of hope.

DEVELOPING EXCELLENCE THROUGH EMPOWERMENT AND PASSION DOING MINISTRY

My first process of how to proceed in the addictions ministry is through spiritual reflection and observation. Our initial phase is to form ‘learning teams’. The hexagon process and learning teams will be an important part of an addictions ministry in its beginning stages. Some other planned strategies and opportunities begins with finding a building. Looking for space to do ministry has developed during the last weeks of writing the thesis project. It is a magnificent opportunity providing an affirmation to these ministry implications. The safe place to do ministry of this range is proposed in the thesis. The vision is taking fruition through the acronym D.E.E.P.DM, which stands for ‘Developing Excellency through Empowerment and Passion in Doing Ministry’. The second phase is to implement funding and resources to go forth with plans for a new church planting in the city of Brockton . Our long-term goal is to nurture all people in the community and in surrounding communities.

Plans for a nurturing DEEP Spiritual Empowerment Center combined with a new church plant facility (a safe place) is now practicable. The location on the North Side of

Brockton, MA, is scheduled for opening in June or July 2007. The space available now is a 3,000 square foot facility with extraordinary accommodations for possibilities to do ministry. The city is multicultural and bilingual that we seek to provide a dynamic outreach to urban dwellers. The Brockton location is ripe for new church plant as the addictions ministry faces the challenges of ministry in complex urban settings in which we live.

In this dissertation and “learnings” of the learning team hexagoning events will be instrumental in the ministry proposed in this works. Additional stages include applying the framework of the hermeneutical circle paradigm in ministry to the community and its urban dwellers. Additional partnerships in the community for funding, grants, and accountability for a new church planting in the city of Brockton is forthcoming allowing future studies and training in technology, church planting, leadership, discipleship, biblical and theological studies, and systems thinking.

We have learned that social systems are living systems, whether sick or healthy. Systems in cities recognize physical and social systems, but usually not the spiritual systems.²⁵¹

“How we do this ministry is from the position of ‘Positive Regard’, where people experience being in a safe environment; they feel, “This is a safe place to talk” about difficult things, that others will care about them. Fear is the fruit of a cult, not an organism which leads to the next steps of relevant communication, perceived needs, basic needs, multiplication, and maintaining the Fruit of the Spirit.”²⁵²

²⁵¹ Hall, DMIN Lecture handouts, E:\dmin\The Nature of Organic Ministry 06 Models Lecture.doc

²⁵² Ibid.

Systems thinkers identify the leverage points in a system. The hexagon event in this project is used as a tool to brainstorm with a learning team to comprehend social reality in a systemic way. The hexagon reflections are a critical piece in doing truth in the addictions ministry. The leverage points in a social system invites a small investment of time and resources that produces a large return. This is learned from natural or special revelation operating in a social system. In an addictions ministry, the causal loop shows the interrelatedness of the reinforcement loops of D. Service Basic Living Needs relates to F. Assess Needs by steps of natural organism at work in a living system for relevant dialogue to take place in this ministry development. With all ministry, as the causal loop diagram depicts is there are always unhealthy areas of negative unintended consequences or hindrances in doing ministry involving the hexagon factors of I. indifferences, O. Unsupportive Pastoral Care and Church, to J. denial and ignoring the problem. Using learning teams and these hexagon factors helps to plan effective approaches to doing ministry in discerning ‘mental models’ to carefully plan by becoming ‘systems actors’ and thus becoming the Family of God, the church where social revelation is ignited by the Holy Spirit, it illuminates it through the Spirit.

The balancing and reinforcing loops on the Illustrations 2, 3, and 4 promotes guidance in the reality of safely nurturing the body of Christ regardless of the problems that exist in the system. The causal loop factors include positive unintended consequences in its reinforcing loops that nurture positive spiritual developments and interventions necessary for long term results.²⁵³ I now have a greater understanding on ministering in the 21st century Church to an addictions ministry in urban settings where tough issues must be dealt with in the church and in our communities.

²⁵³Ibid.

PART 3: CONFRONTATION

CHAPTER FIVE: OUTCOMES, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: ANALYSIS OF BIBLICAL VIEWS ON TOUGH ISSUES FOR TOUGH TIMES

In the city, we see the devastation of sin, abuse, and neglect. There are people who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ as it relates to their daily lives and issues faced on a daily basis. Where are the needed resources that will empower and enable those that God has called to do urban ministry? Where are the treatment centers? Where are the other alternative centers providing the necessary resources to get our children and youth off the street and where so many people are involved in violence, drugs, gangs, and boredom? This is not to diminish those who are sacrificing and doing great things for the kingdom of God, giving love and charity; but who will stand in the gap to be God's spokespersons for those who have no voice who dwell in the city?

A periscope of spiritual models and training strategies are indeed necessary for effective intervention and success in this ministry. There are some pertinent biblical and scriptural passages from the Word of God that will clarify our dialogue, which is relevant to the research on Addictions Ministry. Some of the goals are intervention support groups for those suffering with an addiction and/or substance abuse. A mandated bible study group equipping the saints with the Word of God, applying practical truths of God's Word for daily life through biblical counseling and weekly bible study, education and vocational training network, empowering the church in effective prayer, and the knowledge of God.

The first passage of scripture comes to us from the Apostle Paul, in the book of Ephesians (1:1; 3:1), probably written between A.D. 60 and 62, during Paul's

imprisonment in Rome. It is here that Paul addressed this letter to believers in Ephesus, the capital of the province of Asia.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” (Ephesians 6:10-20).

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10: 3-5).

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19).

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God (Hebrews 10: 19-21)

These Holy Scriptures lay down the very foundation for people who are in any bondage, and affirm for those who suffer from addictions that there is compassion, hope, tolerance, and love for those who are sick. There is acknowledgement that Jesus Christ has come to the earth to set the captives free from whatever condition and affliction mankind may be living with on the earth. There is also insight into the two natures of mankind, the natural man and the spiritual man. In our training institute of discipleship,

there is a real need for understanding the nature of man, the nature of sin, diabolical evil, the flesh, strongholds, afflictions, Adam, and Jesus Christ. I could of list a variety of gospel truth's that the world stands in need of to gain access to freedom.

This knowledge is pertinent to one's spiritual development. With the Truth, I can make a difference in many lives. The account of Moses and his construction of the altar give vivid details of the significance of this parallel in an addictions ministry because so many people who suffer are lost and if in their suffering in the pews usually they are without the knowledge of God.

Let us introduce the Old Testament story when God gave Moses specific instructions for the construction of the altar in Exodus 27:1-8. The altar was to be 'five cubits square and three cubits high [within reach of all]' (v. 1). Five is the number of grace, and three represents the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we go to the brazen altar, we are submitting to (proving) the work of the Godhead—and you will be transformed through His Word! Though you come to the brazen altar strictly on God's terms, you will never be alone. Every human being comes as a sinner in need of a Savior.²⁵⁴

Jesus has already perfected the fire, meaning He has already tempered the flame to facilitate each and every person that will enter. No two people go through the same trial. No one goes through the same fire. God tempers the flame so that it only burns up what He cannot use. What does it mean to be set on fire and consumed in the Spirit? What does it mean to be offered up on the brazen altar as a sacrifice that has been set on fire? This terminology explains what it would feel like after you become committed to a life of prayer, when the Lord allows us to be confronted with certain situations (for

²⁵⁴Bynum, Juanita. *The Threshing Floor*. (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2005), 41.

example, drug addiction, sexual sin and abuse, promiscuity) that will become the very trying of your faith.²⁵⁵ As one of the goals of the ministry, prayer is essential to spiritual development and recovery from addictions.

“The brazen altar was formed out of wood and then overlaid in copper (translated as brass or bronze in some Bible versions). Wood represents humanity, and whenever humanity is involved, there are limitations. Copper symbolizes judgment, so the brazen altar is where God atoned for the limitations of man through the shedding of blood. In ancient Israel, priests sacrificed animal for at this altar. Later, Jesus became the final sacrificial Lamb”²⁵⁶:

But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities; the chastisement [needful to obtain] peace and well being for us was upon Him, and with the stripes [that wounded] Him we are healed and made whole. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has made to light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, [yet when] He was afflicted, He was submissive and opened not His mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her Shearer’s is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. (Isaiah 53:5-7).

God is purifying us in our lives so we can cooperate with what God is trying to do in our life. God wants us to be valuable instruments in His hands, not shallow believers, but those who have been proven to be the real deal. The Bible says test the Spirit by the Spirit. We must confess Jesus as the Son of God and became flesh in the earth. God is calling us in the ministry to addictions to learn about addictive personalities or addictive systems that often times are dysfunctional systems and/or people. God is calling us to be authentic warriors and authentic intercessors. We are called to be ‘Change Agents’. And just like God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they were thrown into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3: 24-25) God will be with us also in an addictions ministry”.²⁵⁷

We must understand that sacrifice always comes before service. The giving of one’s time, money, and teamwork is essential in the ministry. Caution must be given to

²⁵⁵ Bynum, pp. 40-42.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 41-42.

self-will in the church because everything in the flesh, everything we think and feel except that which is a result of the will of God and His word within you will limit what you can do for Him. All flesh must submit to God's authority and God's will, (which is His word), so before we can operate in the Spirit realm, in prayer or in addictions, you must stop at the brazen altar, saying, "God, whatever it is, (addictions), I lay it down." "God, I need help." Jesus is already there, with amazing grace to bring you through the fire.

We do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning. (Hebrews 4:15). Being a life-long learner is essential in our spiritual development. We realize that anyone wishing to be effective in an addictions ministry has to follow the example of Jesus and thus be led by the Spirit of God. What is so valuable here is that in Jesus' Ministry he healed the sick, he cast out devils, and he took upon himself all of our sins, even addictions! So we could be saved and enter into the Kingdom of God.

Professor and Author Dr. Eldin Villafaña addressed pertinent questions to the challenges of Urban Ministry at the dawn of a New Millennium. How do we prepare congregations for change? How do we train/educate a new cadre of Urban Leaders? How do we balance the prophetic, pastoral, and personal priorities in Urban Church Leadership? We ask how can the church play an effective role in ministering to people who suffer from addictions in the 21st century? It is Paul who wrote about the nature of the church in Ephesians, he described it as the 'body of Christ' (Ephesians 1:22-23). Just

as Jesus Christ nurtured His disciples while He was on earth, so Christ's body was to make His disciples after Pentecost. So the church is key to fulfilling the role of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28: 18-20. The church is commanded to go and make disciples of Jesus Christ and fulfill the Great Commission.

In cities across America, an increase in violence and gang activity in our communities, in our schools, and in our neighborhoods are alarming many people. There are serious cases of child predators, Internet addictions (1 out of 8 people are addicted to the internet) which was reported on the morning show, 'Good Morning America' some of these cases are reported on the networks show, 'Dateline NBC' weekly. We view hundreds of dysfunctional men, some involved in sexual addictions; the Internet, obsessive-compulsive behavior, and drug use are interrelated in the actions of these assumed sexual predators. When caught in the act of solicitation of a minor, they are arrested and booked on various crimes. These men come from all walks of life and backgrounds putting many families in incomprehensible circumstances and hopelessness. Addictions awareness is key to understanding this problem in our world.

The Great Commission is to seek the health and well being of those who are poor, and to those who are suffering from addictions. The church has been given a biblical mandate to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The health and unity of the church as a community must be continually developed if the church is to live up to its mandate. The church must be able to openly discuss and preach about these issues on Sunday morning. When the Holy Spirit was given to the church at Pentecost, His power, presence, and gifts

enabled the early church to fulfill the Great Commission in ways never before imagined possible.²⁵⁸

In the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the people of the city engaged in all types of evil; sexual sin, debauchery, lust, pride, homosexuality, orgies, drinking, even addictions and addictive personalities were present as well as sickness, diseases, and death where there too. It is the Lord God who rained down burning sulfur on the city of Sodom and Gomorrah. God destroyed the city. In contrast, addictions can destroy anyone and anything!

The sin of the city was great and grievous (Genesis 18:20, 19:5). In addition, ten righteous persons could not be found (Genesis 19:32). It was a wealthy city, which did not care for the poor (Ezekiel 16: 49, 53). Likewise, the ravishes of addictions has left many cities and neighborhoods poor, destitute and wicked, utterly abandoned, families were displaced and in fear of their very lives.

Addiction has no face meaning anyone and anybody can succumb to live in the grips of addiction, become a heroine junkie, dysfunctional lifestyle, habitual liar and thief, an alcoholic, workaholic, shopaholic, and addicted. Gangs, boarded up buildings, street corner hustlers, demonic strongholds like racism, classism, power, injustices, prostitution, homelessness often char many neighborhoods worldwide. There are many factors including violence, child kidnappings, pornography, domestic violence, the drug and sex industry, lack of truth and prayer in our schools and confronting those dysfunctional systems that already exist that resist change.

²⁵⁸ Newton, Gary C. *Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity*. Zondervan Publishing, International Bible Society, US, 1984, pp. 23, 29.

The increase in reports of methamphetamine use is on the rise in many rural and suburban communities. Getting help and the necessary medical treatment for addictions is not equally available to everyone, whereas the contrast of being a white person and one who has power, wealth, resources, and finances increases your chances of getting the best medical treatment for addictions and other illnesses. If you are wealthy, and white chances are you can afford to seek medical treatment, long term rehabilitation, and perhaps you have the support of a loving family leading to a life free from addictions.

What about those who suffer from addictions who do not have the support of a loving family? Where can they go for treatment in the community other than a hospital? Where can addicts get a comprehensive intervention plan to assist them in obtaining employment, healthy lifestyle, aftercare in the neighborhood in which they live, and access to a potpourri of choices planned with the needs of an individual in a case by case basis? The church is vital in the role of offering alternative strategies and intervention in the medical and rehabilitative treatment of addictions.

When it comes to helping those who suffer from addictions statistics show that treatment is necessary and so is intervention. Statistics reveal how important the support of parents and family, and the community's role is very significant in the recovery process. I propose the 21st Century Church can be significant and make an impact in the times in which we now live.

But how many people seeking treatment can afford to take the time away from their families and even their jobs to seek long or short term help without the consequences of losing their employment, reputation, homes, and even families, or their

dignity. Addictions too often carries stigma's that must be eradicated for the person to admit and take responsibility for their own recovery.

“The story of Noah teaches us that he drank too liberally, more than his head at this age could bear, for he was drunk. Noah was not above temptation, even though he was a prosperous man favored by God. It was said of Noah that he was perfect in his generations (Chapter 6:9) but this shows that it is meant of sincerity, not a sinless perfection. Now the consequence of Noah’s sin was shame. He was uncovered within his tent, made naked to his shame, as Adam when he had eaten forbidden fruit. Yet Adam sought concealment; Noah is so destitute of thought and reason that he seeks no covering. In the prosperity that followed, he became drunk from the fruit of the vineyard he had planted. His son Ham exposed the nakedness of his father while Shem and Japheth covered it from view (Genesis 9:22,23).”²⁵⁹

Here we witness the great evil of the sin of drunkenness. We learn the shameful, guilt, mixed feelings and actions exhibited by his sons as they encounter fathers’ drunkenness. Alcoholism, drunkenness, and addictions leads to sin of great evil proportions and consequences, it discovers men and women. What infirmities they have, they betray when they are drunk, and what secrets they are entrusted with are then easily got out of them. The mental and emotional games become twisted from doing right and doing wrong, compromising, and deceptive practices. “Drunken porters keep open gates. It disgraces them, and exposes them to contempt. As it shows them, so it shames them. People say and do that when in the grips of addiction or drunk which when they are sober they would blush at the thoughts of (Hab. 2:15-16).”²⁶⁰

Noah’s’ thought life and behaviors of himself and his sons is a family affair. The family is a living system and like many other systems it runs either for good or for evil. In many of these systems, everyone in the family becomes infected and affected by the person who is sick, drunk, or suffering with an addiction in the family system. The

²⁵⁹ <http://blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Gen/Gen009.htm1.10/4/05>, p. 7 of 11.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

family cannot function healthy but becomes often dysfunctional in many areas of operation if not all. So it is with one person in a family who is addictive or caught in the grips of addictions, dysfunctional life skills, that the entire family suffers, is untrained, unequipped, and unable to cope with reality, life, and make unhealthy, unwise choices. The family systems of alcoholics have shown children grow up to be children of adult alcoholics who need intervention and treatment. These adult children suffer inferiority complex, identity crisis, panic attacks, depression, fear, sickness, shame and guilt, oftentimes keeping secrets of abuse and childhood trauma suppressed for years. There have been many records of devastation and trauma to families as well as to the lives of innocent children whose parents are active participants in drug use, addictions, and many other kinds of addictions, who are ex-addicts or their children are caught in the cycle of addictions to whatever substance or object. Some of these behaviors are called codependent.

The church is the place where Jesus in the Great Commission mandates strengthening families and making disciples of Jesus Christ. Should not the church play a significant role in our cities to continue to offer support and outreach to families and individuals who have been oftentimes broken, abused, shamed, guilty, and suffering in unbearable circumstances to try to help in the recovery process. Should this begin with the individual rather than the whole family? Does the church family really understand how the family is changing and some of the real life issues of addictions that families are facing in the 21st century? How can we help Mom, Dad, Stepparents, Children, Teenagers, Young adults, to get help from being a junkie, sex addict, alcoholic or alcoholism, internet addictions, addictions detrimental to the family structure, that may

began early, innocently, and has gone undetected or is still in denial. The family structure like many living systems if not detected and treated properly can grow into something bigger, sicker, evil, and demonic.

STRATEGIC INTERVENTION AND REFLECTIVEPRAYER FOR THE CITY (*Genesis 18:16-33*)

The infiltration system of the Gospel and Jesus' strategy for the nations of this world starts with the 'heart' of the individual. The individual then impacts his family, his commitment to the church, his neighbors, his city, and his country, then the world. This is significant as we seek realistic interventions and biblical perspectives. This thesis does not propose to have a formula per se or the cure however we found great ministries operating in the country world-wide who minister to those who suffer from drug addiction and other addictions who are operating in effective ministries and applying the spiritual and biblical remedy for intervention toward recovery and healing an individual from addictions.

A specific comprehensive family community center staffed appropriately is our proposal with clergy involvement towards a redemptive model. The treatment centers need to appear in the city with passionate and trained clergy on staff. Because of the demonic presence in the city, we must be people of serious intentional prayer. Dr. Alfred Smith believes we must teach and preach to the street corner and discover who is on the corner? The corner we speak of is a city corner. It is at the gate we discovered in our biblical investigation on Job in the second DMIN residency is that Christians are to be a

mouthpiece in the city gates. There we can build bridges of hope and wisdom, knowledge and understanding to seek the welfare of the city and urban dwellers.²⁶¹

America, and citizens alike, must wake up to the crisis of addictions in our communities. Our hands and hearts will have to reach out in hospitality and with the power of God. We must pray and acknowledge many things about the issue of addictions where we live in the city. Most importantly we must acknowledge the pain and death in the city. God hears the cry as he heard the outcry from the city people of Sodom and Gomorrah. What will be God's response in the 21st century as he listens to the outcry from people in the city?

My purpose of the implementation of the proposed ministry addictions ministry is to be led by the Spirit of God to enable the best response of proactiveness in the planning of a family community center with an addictions ministry component. Prayer changes things. Prayer is the pipeline to power. From many experiences with the wounded and suffering; a person can become bitter or better. A person can literally die and never had the opportunity to try to change and live a better life. Anger management and conflict resolutions are must topics to be dealt with in an addictions ministry. Prayer seminars, structured programs, intentional workshops, biblical counseling will make a vital impact in this ministry. A new mindset must emerge from our city leaders and our church leaders for the implementation of an addictions ministry. The tools needed are spiritual warfare training workshops, bible study residencies, training in systemic thinking, partnerships to empower the start of an addictions ministry, and communication skills to effectively help the complex issue of addictions in our city to be addressed by the church as we confront the problem in our city.

²⁶¹ Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Lecture Notes of the 2nd Residency, (CUME: Boston, MA 2005).

Leadership development is a necessary element in doing ministry to those who suffer from addictions. God loves everyone in the city and God loves the city. So many efforts and programs have become void in their effectiveness to offer recovery to the alcoholic, drug abuser, and addictions. Substance abuse is on the rise in Brockton and its surrounding communities. Recently, a large constituency of Brockton worshippers and citizens gathered in record numbers to collaborate with the police department, government agencies, and the Mayor's office, to implement a plan for meetings with the Mayor to combat the increase in violence to young people in the city of Brockton. Again, I was told that the day consisted in those seeking power and a name for themselves in proposing effective ministry in the city. The leadership was not represented of all those who live in the city. It was politics and 'brown-nosing' as usual. The vision and implementation of a proposed community center will be effective but it must be a shared vision by its citizens to deal with addictions.

Urban ministry is about building lives for Jesus Christ in the city, in our communities, and in the world. The shalom of the city represents the hospitality, a cordial invite to all, healing and empowerment for everyone's common good in the city. Students, lay persons, and urban leaders must be prepared spiritually, psychologically, socially, systemically, biblically, politically, and strategically to minister in an area that is complex, heterogeneous, dynamic, and oftentimes dark and evil. Training pastors and clergy, and lay persons in sociocultural systems by attending affordable seminaries, workshops, conferences, is short term but an effective way to make the society aware of

the gospel. This is not a time for ego's or selfishness, or another program; healing and hospitality must extend and go beyond the borders of our comfort zones.²⁶²

"Power in weakness became the Pauline theology for the basis of the empowering of leadership in serving 'the lowly of this world' as we see in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. Not many of Paul's followers in Corinth were 'wise', 'powerful', or 'well-born'. For these individuals of lower strata to be organized into a religious group, that is, the Christian ecclesia, whose organizing symbol was the Cross of Christ, something very meaningful and powerful had taken place in their lives: [The Cross] gave them access to an alternative source of power based upon an ideology which taught that the first would be last and the last first, that he who suffered most gained most, that the 'weak' had precedence over the 'strong' ."²⁶³

God's character reveals to us as Judge, Redeemer, Healer, Deliverer, Righteousness, Peace, Hope, Grace, Almighty, and Love. The church and urban leaders are to be a sign of hope and a Spirit-filled community in the midst of a despairing world. The city is ripe for a harvest and the redemptive work of God. Those of us who are spiritually mature and who have the mind of Christ can continue to persevere, develop, train, intervene, and apply the truth of God's redemptive plan for the city. Jesus said I have already overcome the world. We have this blessed assurance that we are not alone. This means we are equipped, trained, and empowered, called out to do the work of the Lord in whatever season, condition, or affliction the city finds itself.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

The strategy of continuous prayer in the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus for direction and guidance is a clarion call in this proposed ministry in the city, particularly Brockton. Other leaders and voices must emerge and be recognized. The spiritual journey

²⁶² Villafañe, *Seek the Peace of the City*, pp. 99-100.

²⁶³ Ibid, p. 110.

and political affiliations is filled with so many misconceptions, deceptive practices, and lies in political, economic, religious, educational, and legal systems where real intervention is hindered on behalf of those suffering from addictions. Christians and the Church need to seek intervention and strategy techniques, effective solutions, systemic solutions on behalf of the people who are suffering and addicted in our city. The church's role must be proactive and visible to eradicate the sin and the suffering associated with and by institutional sins and evil that is embedded in societal structures. The voices of the people are speaking yet is anyone listening?

We pray that we apply kingdom and biblical principles as believers filled with the Holy Spirit, the Liberating Spirit, as we become messengers of healing and empowerment in the addictions ministry. The theology of the city expresses itself through divine healing and divine power in all aspects of city life. The reflection here is to bring peace and healing for the city especially to those who suffer from drug addiction and other addictions through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HOSPITALITY AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE WORD OF GOD

The key to intercession and hospitality for prayer and healing in our ministry is to be compassionate yet confrontational with purpose in the city. The evil systems are complex in our city. The battle to be fought has an accomplice in the human heart, including our own. In addition, each attempt to confront evil in the city calls for the realization that there are always two fronts on which the struggle takes place: an outer and an inner front. For confrontation to become and remain compassionate, these fronts should never be separated. Jesus Christ modeled a radical yet compassionate life. These are actions born out of unity, gratefulness, and are not compulsive but free, not somber,

but joyful, not fanatical but liberating. This action is born of the true knowledge of God's active presence. St. John wrote:

**Something has existed since the beginning,
That we have heard,
That we have seen with our own eyes;
That we have received,
And touched with our hands;
The Word, who is life—
This is our subject.
That life was made visible;
We saw it and we are giving our testimony.**

Biblical passages are the center of our theology of the city for an addictions ministry. We have seen this light and this light is the light of all humanity including those who suffer from addictions who now walk in this light. The writer John exemplifies my own personal testimony, passions for ministry, and the knowledge of God into a foundational truth of the ministry proposed in the thesis.

A theology of the city allows us to touch one another, and evangelize the city with the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in all areas of one's life. Such is the prayer that requires God's promises and presence to sustain us all. We stand in God's presence with open hands, naked and vulnerable, proclaiming to ourselves and to others that without God we can do nothing and we are nothing. We are the children of God and that should matter a lot. The Spirit of God given to us by Jesus Christ speaks freely to us and in us. The discipline of prayer is the discipline by which we liberate the Spirit of God from entanglement in our impatient impulses. We must allow God's Spirit to move freely. We see this in the intercessory prayer of Abraham to God on behalf of Sodom.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁴ *Compassion*, pp. 104-106.

God's answer to our prayers may not show up right away. We know God hears and He answers. We do not know how God is going to respond or when God will act. We must stand alert and ready for God's call to action while we pray and intercede on behalf of the city and its citizens. The ministry for addictions seeks the sick, suffering, oppressed, marginalized, and disenfranchised of our communities. This is applicable to the city, and the global community as well. Drug addiction and addictions are a real big issue in the city. The drug epidemic is making huge headlines, is the topic of talk shows, reality shows, and impacting all communities in the 21st century and worldwide. Can the leaders remain silent on the topic of addictions? I think not!

There is an increase drug use among youth of the drugs heroin and oxycontin along with cold medicines. The small towns of America and its communities are witnessing record numbers of death among teens. Drunken driving has also disguised itself without the proper interventions and education leaving countless tragedies amongst families and teens stripped of their youth. Many laws have been changed to address this phenomenon in Massachusetts such as stiffer penalties and harsher sentences. In this thesis, intervention is critical to integrating a systemic approach to the addictions crisis in the city. Ongoing research and dialogue needs to continue to reflect on the theology of the city and how trained leaders can intervene in this epidemic of drug addictions and other addictions in the city.

The Bible says, "My people die from lack of knowledge" so we must educate, bring awareness, minister, and communicate openly about these tough issue in our pulpits, our homes, our communities, and our cities. The world's systems and Satan has disillusioned and distorted the reality of life in the lives of city people. The addictions

issue is a real issue in our cities we all face every day in communities all over the world. Drugs, and prescriptions drugs, alcohol and sex are widely glamorized in advertisements, videos, music, and medians from magazines, newspapers, etc. However, the misuse and abuse of these anecdotes can lead to addictions when they are abused, misused or a casual indulgence can lead to serious addictions. I have learned that the underlying causes that lead to addictions are too numerous to name here such are depression, lies, shame, guilt, brokenness, and dysfunctional homes, abusive environments, alcoholism, unregenerate minds, sexual abuse, abandonment, denial and blame, family secrets, low self-esteem, poor work ethics, illiteracy, gangs, and so many other hindrances to freedom, separate us from God, and a healthy life. Are these not idols that can lead to addictions?

How do we live and demonstrate the love of God to those who are suffering from addictions who are treated as rejects, outcasts, pitiful sinners, undeserving of love and forgiveness according to many people and the many systems? What role should the church play in ministering the good news of Jesus Christ who is suffering and who need healing in these monstrous conditions in our cities? God is ultimately involved in the everyday affairs of humanity. He cares about what occurs in our lives. We find this in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament. From guiding the children of Israel out of Egypt and to the Promised Land to sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of the world; God deeply cares about his creation. God will go to any extent to bring us back to Him. The servants of God are to have the same mindset. We must continue on all occasions to pray and show love and affection to anyone in the Name of Jesus, even those who suffer from drug addiction and addictions. Our leaders must be urban ministry practitioners and trained to use their gifts and talents in actions of compassion,

agape love, truth and integrity, in the power of the gospel that seeks healing and hospitality for all of humanity.

The value of treatment and intervention is what our goal and purpose is for the healing and holistic approach to treatment for addictions, particularly, drug addictions. From experience and observation, a drug is a drug is a drug. It all has the same effect, which is primarily to anesthetize the pain and escape from reality. A clinic and/or drug and addictions treatment center geared to the treatment of addiction should include a wide variety of services.

Addicts need access to other agencies for special services, but every additional step that they have to take and every additional waiting period increases the likelihood of failure. A clinic or center can provide, in addition to basic medical services and a withdrawal unit, psychotherapeutic opportunities, family casework, vocational counseling, sheltered workshop, biblical counseling, pastoral care, and job placement facilities. This center should be open on a twenty-four basis, although each of the services does not have to provide on such a schedule. The homelike qualities for an addict enable one to feel as an individual human being, valued and respected. This is key to our ministering to the addict once the drug use or pattern of behavior is stopped.²⁶⁵

The ministry of healing and empowering for addictions is critical. A multicultural addictions and intervention center is needed in our cities. Drug abuse and addictions effects are pertinent to other regions of the country and outside the city in the suburbs. It takes ordinary people of the faith who are spirit-filled who can relate to the problems of drug use, addictions, and narcotics addictions, alcoholism, and other related problems from addictions who are the best candidates for help in this ministry. We need leaders

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 381-382.

trained in substance abuse, drug use, addictions, alcohol, and who are sober. My desire is that they have a calling, a passion for an addictions intervention ministry. Some of these leaders perhaps have been delivered, healed, and liberated by the power of God, who have the knowledge and wisdom of God and can inspire others.

Spiritual leaders are vital in this ministry, and others who are willing to be trained in addictions and working with addicts. One of the essential skills is training; biblical and spiritual training in urban ministry, a theological education, knowledge of the Word of God, teaching and mentoring addicts, drug addiction education. The hospitality metaphor of love one and reach one, feed one and cloth one is biblical, recovery treatment and drug rehabilitation centers built upon a spiritual setting is most effective. Many churches have already implemented successful programs and centers based on drug use intervention and addictions recovery.

The passion for a multicultural strategy to the problem of addictions is relevant today. A ministry that impacts men and women from all nationalities and cultures is the model of Jesus Christ we follow closely here. The spiritual forces in the world cause us to enlist spiritual warriors who know how to fight against principalities, rulers of wickedness in high places, darkness, strongholds and demons that only come to kill, steal, and destroy. There is no particular category, or face of an addict. Those who suffer from addictions come from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, gender, and situations. There is no perfect profile or category of an addict; an addiction is no respecter of persons. An addiction has no face! Therefore, ‘hospitality’ as well as empowering and healing is the pursuit in this ministry. We find Lot in Genesis 19:3 feeding and preparing

a meal for his special guests. They are welcomed guests and we learn from scripture in the gospel of Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus says:

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

I am grateful I have been healed, delivered, and set free yet it is still a spiritual journey of healing and empowerment, but for the Grace of God! Everyday is a constant and consistent application of doing truth, applying the Word of God to every situation I encounter, and practicing the presence of God through worship, prayer, and the Church. In the twenty-first century church, the need for effective interventions and ministry builds upon a theology of the city. The city is a place loved by God. “For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). As visionaries for Christ, we need reflection and inspiration that is relevant to the systemic thinking approach concerning the epidemic of addictions in our cities and in our communities. My belief is that ‘removing the veil’ is where people can unlearn those behaviors and hindrances that block them from receiving hope, love, peace, joy, healing, and ‘hospitality’, and treatment as special guests. God loves all people in the city!

“Cities are often not receptive places for the development of Christianity; and those who would minister there will often have a Lenten experience in their ministry. Our theologically trained students need to be brought to the point of crying out: “You keep showing us what won’t work. Well, is there anything that

does? At that point in the learning process, students are ready to be taught about urban ministry.”²⁶⁶

Likewise, the cry for help from those who suffer from addictions, sounds like this, “You mean as an addict I don’t have to use anymore”, “take it one day at a time”, and “Can I change and live again?” this is where ministers teach them how to live addiction free and disciple them for a new life through Jesus Christ. “The Leadership development that is faith-based needs to be about empowerment of both laity and ministry leaders for leadership in our church and its larger community.”²⁶⁷

Is not there a balm in Gilead? How can we confront the powers of darkness and unite the walls of injustice to walls of justice for all? This is a time in our history for missions here in America and the world. A time to show genuine love (agape) and hospitality (spiritual) and a cordial invitation for all to be heard, seen, and to experience the true love, hope, and power as well as healing in the city. In American cities, and in the urban scene worldwide, I am reminded how the bible foretells the last days would be those liken unto Noah. Christians are soldiers, on the battlefield in our city and world to win souls. The focus on kingdom principles and the role of the church must be applicable and simple in developing a ministry with people whose minds are to be renewed by the Word of God. It is a theology of the city we deem relevant and ever changing to meet the needs of the people. A theology of the city that is welcoming, user-friendly, and offers empowerment to anyone (hospitality), seeking wholeness, shalom, and healing for our nations, my local city, and its inhabitants. It is here we observe, research, analyze, reflect, understand, and know our theological and biblical insight of

²⁶⁶ Villafañe, *Seek the Peace of the City*, 102.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 103.

doing truth in urban ministry is what God is calling for in the Ministers of the 21st century church. God is no respecter of person.

So we are compelled to create a stirring in the souls of people in the city to inspire them all by the Word of God to convict them of the lives that are being destroyed because people have not heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Relevancy of the Word of God is effective to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to train effective leadership in the church. Part of an effective ministry is to show people the love of God, give them hope where there is despair, and faith in the darkest nights and hours, through their trials and tests, and in tribulations. The church is called to minister hope, deliverance, protection, to be place of refuge, and healing for those who are sick. Ministers and leaders are being called to a theology of the city in a critical time in our nation's history.

A foundation built on Jesus Christ will stand; any other foundation will not last or add long-term positive effects to any ministry. Both the involvement of effective teams and open communication that is free-flowing in a systematic approach can contribute to a shared vision and a shared common good for the welfare of the city and its people. The same passion of effective teamwork and a systematic approach to addictions is invaluable to the city. Throughout the scriptures Jesus' example in doing ministry, in giving hospitality, speaks volume of compassion, love, wholeness, and affirmation. This hope always seeks the peace (shalom) of the city and the people who live there. We are our brothers and our sister's keeper! God will heal the land! God will empower us with the Holy Spirit! The Church is to play a significant and key role in restoring the city to the city of God.

FUTURE STUDY ON BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE IN ADDICTIONS MINISTRY

In the examination of complex urban systems, the city is more complex in its issues than we imagined that are critical to urban ministry. This involves power systems, hierachal systems, governmental and religious systems, political and economic systems, justice, prison, technological, and social systems. As a Spirit-filled community, the body of Christ is on high alert, which means we are in spiritual warfare for the lives of people, boys and girls, males and females, children, youth, families, and rich or poor, black or white, it doesn't matter! See addictions have no face. There is no set profile to determine who will become a full-blown heroin addict, alcoholic, sex addict, and prostitute. Anyone is suspect in this world. In addition, the Katrina devastation in New Orleans clearly reminds us of how vulnerable a city can become when hit with a natural disaster of immense magnitude.

Whenever there are people in hopeless and despairing conditions, it is the liberating Spirit of God who responds to the condition of the city and its inhabitants in miraculous ways. It is also God's pleasure to use humanity as his representatives in the earth. In the world, everything was made by God and for God. Jesus came into the city and he turned the city upside-down to conform them into the likeness of Christ, to save them, and to heal them.

The city is where we often find the face of poverty, the face of sin, psychological and mental disorders, disabilities of all kinds, hopelessness, violence, rejection, despair, and the manifestation of evil in every area of life. We see injustices, racism, classis, and addictions destroying the lives of people everywhere. Jesus is a deliverer, a healer, who has already overcome the world by the death of the Cross. The church is the living

organism, creating as a caring community for the lost, the broken, the sick, and the oppressed people of God. The church is the organism that influences by the Holy Spirit spiritual reconciliation, recovery and healing in the broken lives of people in the city and in the world.

What we know of the theology of the city based on the foundation of scripture we speak of ‘shalom’, compassion, hope, love, deliverance, miracles, supernatural power, healing, and we speak to **‘hospitality’** in the city and for its inhabitants. The foundation being led by the Holy Spirit to serve those who suffer from all kinds of addictions, and dysfunctional families to a revelation of the Word of God envisioned by **‘the removing of the veil’**. Whether its worldly systems, government and church systems, individuals, cults, or corporate systems, business and world organizations, family systems, when people fall broken it is the local church available with compassion instead of criticizing, judging, and putting people down. In the church today, it is important to advertise just like any other organization support systems to remove the veil from our hearts, our minds, and our souls to pursue justice, refuge, hope, and love for all individuals holistically. We can no longer use the slogan by Nancy Reagan, ‘Just Say No’ and put a band-aid on the complex issue of drugs and addictions.

We are ambassadors of the gospel of Jesus Christ seeking the ‘shalom’ of the city and its people. Many church leaders are planning effective ministries in their communities helping rebuild broken lives ravaged by addictions. Are they systemic in their implementation and understanding of the tough issues? Some have implemented such programs. It is needful to visit and explore these ministries. It will be helpful to form interpersonal networking allegiances with all its resources in pursuit of the common

good for all individuals and their specific needs. “If ‘Shalom’ is to emerge in the city, sin must be dealt with. The shalom of the city is where we bring about justice, liberty, and freedom for all people.”²⁶⁸

The training institute is necessary for empowerment and intervention in the addictions ministry. It will place emphasis on issues of discussion involving addictions and that an addiction is a spirit and it is evil, and it is a sinful condition. It is Jesus who came to save the lost and we preach Christ to the addicts. In the city of Brockton, there are a number of 12 step groups and AA/NA meetings taking place everyday at various locations throughout the city. Brockton is a city that is culturally rich and diverse. There is a large number of Hispanics, Cape Verdeans, Haitians, Blacks, Whites, Portuguese, Brazilians, Irish, Polish, and ethnicities from around the world. The cultural make-up of our urban cities is changing every day.

In addition, there is a subculture of drug addicts and those who suffer from addictions is real in our city. In specific locals within the city, prostitution and drug addiction is visible and enormous. There are also rehabilitation centers and hotlines to assist those who are in need of help and oppressed by the ravages of drug addiction. Presently, there is a combination of mental health issues including addictions where some people seek help. With the problems of addictions, drug addiction, and substance abuse stem other more complex problems we must face. There is a lack of resources, particularly, for women, and men in seeking treatment for addictions in our city. The local city of Brockton has no holistic center, halfway house, and addictions center geared

²⁶⁸ Eldin Villafañe, DMIN lecture notes 3rd residency. Boston (CUME) campus, Boston, MA 2006.

towards empowerment, healing, intervention, and most importantly combining all these factors including a biblical foundation based on Jesus Christ.

For this ministry to begin, one of the key foundations is the knowledge we find in biblical passages. My own biblical studies with addictions and drug addicts, dysfunctional people as well, there are invaluable biblical scriptures pertaining to our condition and addictions. It is applicable to our human development and spiritual growth in an addictions ministry involving restoration and recovery.

The Israelites were familiar with various forms of intoxicating liquor. The Hebrew word ‘**sekar**’ from **skr** means ‘*drink oneself drunk*’. First of all, sermons, discussions, communication of these scriptures, by many people leave them unaware of the biblical truths concerning the history of drug use and what the bible says about drugs except for those common quoted scriptures to make a personal point or cover up for personal usage. The Old Testament does not indicate the precise nature of this ‘strong drink’ but in the NIV Bible translation it refers to ‘**fermented drink**’ distinguishing it from ‘wine’ which in the OT (Leviticus 10:9; Numbers 6:3), the term probably refers to various intoxicants made from apples, dates, and barley. The Egyptians made a type of beer from barley, wheat, wild saffron, and salt. Both wine and strong drink were imbibed in Jewish Celebrations (Isaiah 24:9) and both were employed for medicinal purposes and to alleviate distress (Proverbs 31:6).²⁶⁹

We discovered in the treatment of addictions that many people use drugs and other addictions to escape hurt, boredom, shame, and pain from the sometimes realities of life, childhood trauma, in other words, the distress of life. Addictions are a form of

²⁶⁹ Nicoll, W. Robertson. Ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1940.

escape into a world where one is not conscious of reality and the root causes of their pain, so they oftentimes numb their emotions and memories to the events, circumstances, and people who inflicted or cause the distress in the first place causing resentments and unforgiveness which is like a poison in one's systems if not eradicated properly.

"Nevertheless, the perils of strong drink were well known to biblical people, (Proverbs 20:1; Isaiah 5:11). Rulers, priests, and prophets were to avoid intoxicants so as to not impair their capacity to function. (Proverbs 31:4-5; Isaiah 56:12; Leviticus 10:9-11; 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; Isaiah 28:7). Nazarenes and others pledged themselves to abstention (Numbers 6:3; Judges 13: 4, 7, 14; Jeremiah 35:6ff; Luke 1:15). Drunkenness was viewed as a significant social evil (Genesis 9:20-27; 19:31-38; ct. 1 Samuel 1:15-16; Hosea 4:18; Luke 21:34). These are just a few of the vast biblical references on Drunkenness and Addictions that are worth studying and can be used for more research efforts in this ministry and future study.²⁷⁰"

The root word for drugs comes directly out of the Word of God. The Greek New Testament and the Septuagint word "**Witchcraft**" occurs only once in the New Testament and "**sorcery**" twice, (**Galatians 5:20; Revelation 9:21; Revelation 18:23**).

The word in the Greek New Testament in all three cases of these scriptures is "**pharmakeia**", derived from the word "**pharmakon**" ("drug"), the source of the English word **pharmacy** and its cognates. I learned this biblical aspect from involvement in a small caring community in my local church. Communication was open, honest, and confidential in the small group. For the first time, talking about my addictions enlightened me to stop blaming myself for my addictions and condition. This does not mean I was not responsible for my actions. Now I had learned what the root of the problem was that existed in my choices and addictions in life. I received divine revelation according to God's Word that there was more evil in the presence of my lifetime of drug use and other addictions that I needed to consider for me to live and heal properly! The

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

“sorcery” or “magic”, but its cognate “sorcerer” (**pharmakous**) used in Revelation 21:8 and Revelation 22:15 is translated “mixer of poisons” as well as “magician”. The root of both words, **pharmakon**, literally means ‘poison’ or ‘drug’.” How many people will admit or can recollect situations where they witnessed odd and peculiar behavior from recall someone in their life who has had a few too many drinks and drugs?

Many persons do not realize using drugs is a form of suicide and slow death. The ingredients in many substances like crack cocaine, metha amphetamine, viacadon, alcohol, pornography, and heroine are lethal, potent substances that can be life-threatening leading to hospitalization and/or death and incarceration.

In doing truth in an addictions ministry, we must acknowledge that there is a system of evil, witchcraft, and magic in our midst operating through spirits and not the flesh and blood of this world. Just look at any local liquor establishment, liquor store, (and sexual predators caught on NBC’s Dateline investigations), you will observe a wide variety of names and advertisement marketing for sales of alcohol like wine & spirits, skull and crosses and bones, seducing potions, and other secret mixtures. The advertisement gives off a sense of *magic* suggesting some form of euphoric escape and seduction in one’s mood. These alcohol mixtures date back in the bible as we have shown and still we see the hypnotic, medicinal, manipulating tools to allure people to give some a try not realizing it could be detrimental to their health and well being.

If we look at the statistics on drug use in the United States; it is staggering how many people spend money on alcohol and drug use in America. The drug trafficking industry is a billion dollar industry and growing among our children, our youth; it is utterly destroying our families and our neighborhoods, particularly the crack cocaine and

alcohol industry. . Likewise, the many men that are caught on NBC's Dateline investigations as alleged sexual predators come from a wide range of male adults' ages and backgrounds as well as job positions.

It is important in our addictions ministry that the proper information is taught and effectively passed on. The truth of the scriptures concerning addictions and substance abuse information must be studied in light of God's Word. More than that, one of the foundational scriptures of this project reads as follows:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

My own personal experience involving the studying of God's Word for addicts and addictions took on a new meaning for the search for truth. I wanted desperately to be free and healed from the devastation of drugs and addictions in my life. My experience of healing, deliverance, and empowerment resulted in systems thinking and seeking the Word of God on how to live free from addictions. In a small caring group at MMBC, I observed that many people who suffer from addictions and spirits (not the Holy Spirit or God's Spirit) manifest these evil and false teachings about Jesus Christ and about who they really are. Apparently, in this community resulted in learning the truth and applying the truth of the Word of God in our lives, individually and collectively, allowing the process of healing and treatment; intervention and practical help to take place. We, in the group new babies in the faith; new believers in Jesus Christ; witnessed the power of God in people who were in bondage, brokenness, and in diseases, grievously seduced by evil

spirits, unregenerate thoughts, unresolved issues in life, began to come to surface and communicated within the group.

There were times I observed areas of people's live who literally we had to rebuke evil, cast out devils, (very successfully, too)fast and pray for discernment in the ministry to allow the Holy Spirit to teach us many and (all) things. In other words, we had to be transformed by the renewing of our minds and yield our hearts with the Word of God, having the mind of Christ by seeking God's Will through the Holy Scriptures.

As an active participant of a learning community, I (didn't know it was a learning community at the time) along with others as members of MMBC) shared a common vision for healing, restoration, empowerment, and reconciliation of everyone to God our Father. Did we have difficulties, challenges, and obstacles to embrace these truths? Yes, there were many tests and trials! But we continued to witness the transforming power in the group and in our own individual lives. Everyone became submissive to the teaching of the Word of God and the Almighty God. We observed miracles and answers to prayers. I observed healing and supernatural breakthroughs for those prayer needs of those suffering from addictions, substance abuse, bipolar disease, and all kinds of unresolved issues pertaining to topics of incest, rape, drug abuse, suicide, incarceration, marriage, single life, faith, demons, spiritual warfare, mental and physical health, childhood trauma, and other spiritual conditions. I even witnessed a young man relapse after being in recovery for just a short time (approximately 3 weeks), Melvin used drugs for one night, unfortunately Melvin died a young man leaving a beautiful girlfriend he was engaged to marry. It was tragic and the group continued to pray, we all learned about the reality of addictions from this experience, and continued to grow in God. It was

a great learning community at MMBc. Realistically, there is little in the Church that has been instrumental in intervention on behalf of the restoration of God's children back to God of this magnitude and intimacy. What has happened is many leaders are unaware of a learning community. The hierachal systems and dysfunctions in the church today hinder this progress. I do try to incorporate as an urban practitioner and systems thinker the effectiveness of some of the tools into my Christian education classes. The results have been very effective over the past five years.

Intervention is key to successful treatment for an addict or those suffering from addictions. The 'mixer of poisons' as we described in previous paragraphs is understood to be the users of drugs and poisons which literally results in those who suffer from addictions and drug abuse being under its spell and bondage. God clearly states that Pharmakeia (the use of drugs) is a sin in Galatians 5:19-20a, the scriptures read, "the acts of the sinful nature are obvious; sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, and witchcraft", and its affects on people and Christians is walking according to the flesh. This flesh is an enemy of God. It is very challenging for the church to hear "sermons" preached about 'sin and addictions as well as other real issues in our world today. I was once offered a forum to teach the biblical history on drugs and addictions. In the church, I had the opportunity to teach on the biblical history and addictions using scripture as the foundation. In a one-hour workshop, I discovered how difficult it was for the church to respond to the information. The audience that night (mostly women) loved the information that was presented in the church for the first time in this type of forum. The presentation was followed by discussion (questions and answers) pertaining to where to get help, signs of addictions, motives, bible inquiry, how to help someone, care and

concerns of all types surfaced in the discussion. Finally, the most startling revelation reported in the discussion of how come the church does not talk about, preach about, or been given this information to let the congregation know how to minister to these issues we face in our everyday lives like addictions and substance abuse.

How can we minister healing and recovery to those who suffer and cannot discuss the conditions, behaviors, circumstances or experiences, without feeling judged, labeled or condemned? Perhaps, we need to train leadership and ministers to take a proactive role in addressing the issues we face in the city. Can we get to know people more realistically and intimately so we can better help them in their needs?

In 1 Peter 5:8, God calls us to be sober and avoid attacks from Satan. We learned that a person who is intoxicated or high or suffers from other addictions couldn't avoid attacks from the evil one on their own free will. I am persuaded, informed, and passionate about further study of the importance of the Word of God to this proposed ministry. There are many agencies in the community of Brockton treating individuals and families for alcohol, drug addiction, bipolar, heroine, sexual addictions, idolatry, and other addictions. The church is home to many dysfunctional people and to those who suffer from addictions. The statement by N. Gordon Cosby, sums it up this way, "I'm afraid the churches are just enabling the addictions of our culture. If we are not free from the cultural addictions in the church, how can we be a healing presence for all those who need to be set free?" This statement is one of many motivating reasons why the call to intervention and outreach through spiritual development, biblical counseling, and teaching is so important to this ministry.

Addiction is part of a spiritual disorder and long-term recovery is part of the systemic process and thinking. Open communication and tough talks about those who suffer from addictions helps to eradicate the taboo and stigmas associated with people's thinking in the church. The church and other agencies need to connect and partner in these efforts of intervention to provide safe havens from the storms of addictions and the pains that addictive persons experience in our communities and in the church. We believe the church should be the resource, 'the safe haven' for the shalom of these efforts providing unconditional love, acceptance, compassion, hope, intervention, healing and reconciliation. The Word of God (above all else) is for those people who suffer from any addictions to be united to their Creator, God. Many people I learned in research and my studies do not understand the root causes of addictions and how the manifestations of addictive behaviors are a clue to other deep spiritual conditions. I believe we all have unhealthy mental models, distorted truths, beliefs, and values as human beings and because of our sinful nature we really do need a spiritual remedy.

There is a great need for communication of mother to father, parents to children, children to parents, neighbor to neighbor. Do we continue as Ministers to ignore the silence and breakdown of our families in our communities and in the church? Shouldn't we look again, reflect again, discover again and system think again? Bringing people together on a learning team and sharing a vision is very challenging in and of itself. Confession and admitting there is a problem is the key step in many treatment programs of AA, NA and other twelve step programs. It is a critical step in surrendering all of your life to Almighty God. It is a critical step in breaking out of denial into admittance we

need to really talk about our real selves, our real issues we are facing today. Here in this thesis awareness and research study of the addictions problems is real.

Lord, how excellent are Thy ways, and how devious and dark are the ways of man. Show us how to die, that we may rise again to newness of life. Rend the veil of our self-life from top down as thou didst rend the veil of the Temple. We would draw near in full assurance of faith. We would dwell with Thee in daily experience here on this earth so that we may be accustomed to the glory when we enter Thy heaven to dwell with Thee there. In Jesus Name. Amen.²⁷¹

²⁷¹ [http://calvarychapel.com/library/Tozer-AW/Pursuit of God/03.htm](http://calvarychapel.com/library/Tozer-AW/Pursuit%20of%20God/03.htm).

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VITA

Coralotta Bates was born on April 29, 1959 in Brockton, Massachusetts, where she is a lifelong resident and educated most of her life. Upon graduation from Brockton High School in 1977, she attended the historical Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1977, then attended the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass. From 1980 through 1984, she earned her undergraduate degree a Bachelor of Science Degree in Journalism and Public Relations from Suffolk University in Boston, MA. Upon completion of this degree, she received her Masters of Divinity degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary as a honor student at CUME in Boston, May 2002. She also attended the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA. During her seminary years, she worked as an assistant in the campus library, campus bookstore, and in various capacities assisting students and faculty, at the Center For Urban Ministerial Education known as CUME-GCTS, the Boston campus prior to her graduation. While attending seminary, she attended the Urban Teachers Program on a full scholarship and successfully completed provisional certification in Teachers licensure towards a Masters Degree in Elementary Education from Wheelock College in its 'Urban Teacher Program' in the Summer of 2003. This project is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctor of Ministry degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Her studies shall be completed in May 2007.

Coralotta Bates grew up in the Baptist Church most of her life, her Christian conversion was at an early age. She attended Messiah Baptist and Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in Brockton, MA. She has been active in various church activities like choirs, workshop facilitator, minister, spiritual encourager, prayer and worship teams, Christian education, teacher, and preacher. She hosts the annual National Day of Prayer in the city of Brockton. Rev. Bates is an Ordained Minister/Clergy of The American Baptist Churches USA (TABC) and the Old Colony Baptist Association. She serves as an Associate Minister on the Ministerial Staff at Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in Brockton, MA.

She is the daughter of Mrs. Ruth Darwin and the late William Darwin. She is the wife of Deacon Willie Bates, and the mother of two children, Swen Daniels, 22 yrs. old and Raquel Duncan, 19 yrs. old.